

1955 Expected To Be Light Year for Polio; 'Reservoir' Built Up

By DELOS SMITH
United Press Science Editor

New York—(U.P.)—This year is likely to be the lightest year for polio since 1951 but scientists devoted to the study of the behavior of communicable diseases under "natural conditions" think the Salk vaccine won't have much if anything to do with it.

The scientific reason why 1955 probably will be light is because 1952, 1953, and 1954 were all heavy years—1952 was the heaviest in history. This means that "natural conditions" have built up a huge new "reservoir" of people who can't get one or another or all the three types of polio because they're immune.

This new "reservoir," the scientists figure, is made up mainly

ly of children. For every child—or adult—who comes down with polio there may be as many as 100 who are having polio which is too mild to be recognized. But these persons have polio viruses in them—their body chemistry is building the antibodies which will ward off further attacks by the viruses.

Numbers Vary

Thus, a series of heavy years is most likely to be followed by a few light years. The whole history of polio demonstrates that this is so. Most persons by the time they reach adulthood have immunity to at least one type of polio, sometimes to all three. Childhood is the time when this immunity is being acquired "under natural conditions" and so the scientists calculate that the last three heavy years gave "silent" polio cases to thousands of children, along with immunity.

The behavior of circulating polio viruses so far this year gave support to their reasoning. In January, which is always a low month, the number of reported cases were about the same as last year. Then this year's number dropped steadily and was far below last year's by April. But polio cases are few at that time of year—the drop indicated either that there was more immunity in the general population or there were fewer polio viruses in circulation.

In April this year's number of cases began shooting up and soon was running ahead of last year's total for the same time, which showed that the viruses were circulating in goodly number. But within a few weeks, this year's cases began decreasing in number and now are running around 40 per cent below last year's.

'Reservoir' Present
What this meant to three epidemiologists canvassed by the writer was that this year's circulating viruses were brought up short by the new "reservoir" of immune persons, mainly children. The polio season now is past its height in the South and, perhaps significantly, the states which had the most cases last year, have shown the greatest drop. In Texas for example, 76 cases were reported for the week ended July 9. For the comparable week last year the total was 146.

The reason why the epidemiologists wouldn't credit the Salk vaccine is that not enough children have had "shots" to make the difference. In the South some 2,000,000 six, seven, and eight year-olds have had one "shot," which is but a fraction of the most susceptible ages, from one to 18. Since the chance of any given child getting polio even during a heavy polio epidemic is mathematically slight and since the known effectiveness of the Salk vaccine ranges from 50 to 80 per cent, the effect of only 2,000,000 "shots"—and first "shots" at that—are at present "unmeasurable."

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The backgrounds for the fighting was Moroccan demands for greater independence and disputes among the French themselves on how much independence should be granted.

Tijuana, Mex. — (U.P.) — Bette Ford, one-time New York a-tress-model, will make her major bullfight debut today.



DRESSED IN NATIVE costume, four hopefuls for Miss Universe contest arrive in Long Beach, Cal. From left, Leonor Carache, Miss Ecuador; Carmen Laura Betancourt, Miss Puerto Rico; Isabel Salri, Miss Argentina; Hanya Bedoun, Miss Lebanon. (International)

Preparation of Crop Estimate Reports Closely Guarded Secret

Washington—(U.P.)—You could make a killing in the market if you could just get advance information on the Agriculture department's periodic crop estimates.

But stop dreaming. No secrets are more closely guarded than the estimated production of such speculative crops as corn, wheat, cotton, oats, soybeans, livestock, and many others that go to make up the nation's store of food and fiber.

If you want to test the truth of this, and are willing to spend some time in mild captivity, just walk into the Agricultural Estimates division while a crop report is being prepared.

You'll find yourself a captive until the report has been published. No exceptions are made. Whoever wanders into the division at such a moment—and that goes for the Agriculture secretary himself—is required to stay put once inside the crop reporting board's working quarters during preparation of a report.

It's been that way for 50 years and in that time there has been no pre-release leak of an Agriculture department production estimate.

The ultra secrecy surrounding the crop report stems from the cotton scandal of 1905. A high official of what was then called the Bureau of Statistics, which prepared crop estimates, used advance knowledge of what the government report would show to speculate in the cotton futures market.

Arranged Signals

He passed on his information to accomplices by means of signals involving movement of window shades. A court trial then brought out that the official's share of profits from use of information thus leaked amounted to more than \$70,000. He was fined \$5,000.

Congress ordered the department to keep crop reports secret until time for their release to everyone. The department accordingly started what has become known as the "lockup" preceding crop reports.

There are an average of three lockups a month. Some months there are only two, but in December there are five. All involve crop reports that have speculative value.

The release time of reports is tied in with the opening and closing of markets. For example, Congress sets the release

hour for the cotton report at 11 a.m. to coincide with the closing of the Liverpool cotton market. The department releases general crop reports simultaneously with, or after, the closing of the New York Stock and Chicago Grain markets.

When the lockup begins depends on the volume of work to be done in preparing the report. The cotton lockup begins at 7 a.m. the day of the report. The lockup for last Monday's general crop report began at 5 a.m. The time for other lockups varies.

Here is how reports like last Monday's general crop report are prepared:

The 41 field offices for the 48 states make up their reports and recommend them to the crop reporting board.

The recommendations are airmailed to a locked box in care of the office of the Secretary of Agriculture. The box also has two locks. The secretary's representative has the key to one and the chairman of the crop reporting board has the other.

The Lockup

About 20 minutes before the board's working quarters are locked up, the board's chairman and secretary, the secretary's representative, and one or more members of the field force proceed under guard to the box, unlock it, and bring the unopened mail to the working quarters.

The quarters, Wing 4 of the

department's south building, is locked, with guards posted outside at each end.

Inside, telephones and intercom systems are disconnected, the venetian blinds at all windows are closed and locked by means of a slotted rod which then is sealed. The technicians study the state recommendations, arrive at production estimates for each state, and pass the information along to the board chairman who determines the final estimate.

Tables Prepared

The information then goes to computers and tabulators who prepare tables which are stenciled and mimeographed. The entire report then is signed 15 to 20 minutes before it is issued. The signer must be the secretary, undersecretary, or one of the assistant secretaries.

The doors are then unlocked and the report is given to newsmen standing by open telephones to their offices. The report thereupon is transmitted throughout the country, and the lockup is over.

But not until then, as Arthur M. Hyde of Missouri found out several years ago when he was secretary. He came a bit early to sign the report. After signing he picked up his hat and said he was leaving. The board chairman told him he couldn't. Hyde tried to call his office. The telephone was dead. He stayed until release time.

Rioters Attack Morocco Governor

Casablanca, Morocco — (U.P.) — Snipers fired from darkened balconies, fires raged at a dozen points and Frenchmen attacked their own governor-general with their fists in riot-torn Casablanca last night.

Police authority was almost at the vanishing point and a full-scale race war threatened. Thirty-two persons already have been killed and 104 injured in three days of street fighting.

The city was under martial law and French troops patrolled the streets day and night breaking up demonstrations and riots. Gilbert Grandval, French resident general who drew the anger of his countrymen here for his liberal policy toward Moroccans, was attacked at a funeral for six persons who were killed by a bomb planted by Moroccan terrorists Thursday.

A mob broke through police lines as Grandval left the services and pounded him with fists and tore his white uniform. He broke free when troop reinforcements arrived.

Earlier, police armed with bazookas and machineguns fired twice into crowds of Moroccan rioters who defied the martial rule. Five were killed and 18 wounded.

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Couple Walk Away From Crash Landing

Lone Pine, Calif. — (U.P.) — George Hall, 45, and his wife, Marjelle, 42, of Los Angeles, walked away from a crash-landing of their small plane Saturday at Grant airstrip 30 miles southwest of here.

Hall, who was bruised and shaken up, said his engine failed. Mrs. Hall was flown to Porterville where she was treated for lip and nose cuts.

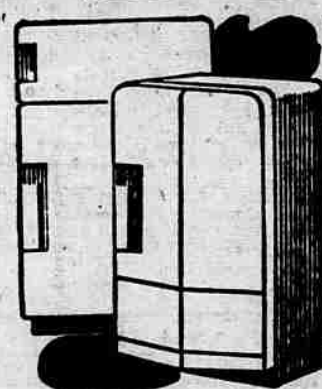
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