

**The Medical Roundup**

by *Walter Conway*

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**THE PAIN OF GOUT**

For hundreds of years, we physicians have wondered why a gouty man should develop such extreme pain in one of his big toe-joints. Now, Drs. James S. Fairies and Daniel J. McCarty Jr. of Philadelphia, report that they have found that by injecting crystals of sodium urate into their own knee-joints, they could produce a very painful gouty arthritis. The pain was so bad that for three days, they had to go around on crutches.

We still don't know why occasionally urate crystals will drop out of solution in the blood, and we don't know why they should so commonly attack the big toe-joint of one foot. Any man who wakes at two in the morning with almost unbearable pain in his big toe-joint can know that he has the gout. To find this out, he doesn't have to consult a doctor.

A leading authority on gout, my friend Dr. John H. Talbot, was recently asked about the uses of colchicine and Benemid, drugs which are used in the treatment of gout. Dr. Talbot said that colchicine is of value in treating the acute and painful attacks of gout, and in preventing the recurrence of the attacks.

**No Immediate Effect**

Curiously, the colchicine does not have any demonstrable effect on the body's handling of uric acid, and curiously, the drug Benemid has no immediate effect on the terrible pain in a big toe-joint. What it does, perhaps after it has been taken for a few months, is to reduce the amount of uric acid in the body that the gouty person has fewer attacks or none at all.

Dr. Talbot recommends that all persons severely afflicted with gout take each day 1 or 2 tablets of both colchicine and Benemid, for a minimum of 1 to 3 years. Then the dosage can be reduced. In his years of experience, Dr. Talbot has not seen any bad side-effects from giving these drugs.

**Skin Irritation**  
 Dr. George Waldbolt of Detroit, in his book, "Contact Dermatitis" (Thomas, 1953), says that very annoying itching of the crotch can be due to the eating of certain foods, such as walnuts, which contain oil which irritates the skin of some persons when it comes out through the bowel.

**Nursery Education Meeting Scheduled**

The third annual meeting of the Oregon Association of Nursery Education will be held at Colleen Hope's Studio, 45 Hawthorne ave., at 8 p.m., Monday, May 6.

All persons interested in education for the five-year-old are invited to attend.

Dr. Phyllis Butler, Southern Oregon college, and state chairman of the standards committee of the association, will speak on "Today's Kindergarten." Mrs. Wilbur Bushnell, also Southern Oregon college, will speak on the importance of kindergarten instruction.

Exhibits of materials and activities will be provided by kindergarten teachers of the southern Oregon chapter.

Additional information may be obtained from Mrs. Paul Ashby, area vice president, or Mrs. Dale Coverstone, chapter president.

**WEDDING COSTS \$1,850**

London - (UPI) - Prime Minister Harold Macmillan said Thursday that Princess Alexandra's wedding at Westminster Abbey last week cost the British government \$1,850 - most of which was spent on decorations of The Mall on the route of the wedding procession.

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By SYLVIA PORTER  
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**STEEL PRICE RISE IS GOOD THING**

The modest, "selective" increase in steel prices is among the good things that have happened to the U. S. economy so far in 1963 - on four counts.

It indicates that prices of industrial materials and non-food wholesale prices finally are firming up. The relative weakness in these critical price areas has been a drag on our economy throughout the entire 27 months of this expansion.

It is another important signal that our economy is strengthening. We are moving off the plateau into a new upturn.

It will not significantly increase the pace of rise in living costs in 1963 and this year's rise still is authoritatively estimated within the 1 1/2 per cent range. Price increases could accelerate in 1964, though, and become a problem again.

It is a distinct contribution to business confidence. This confidence is a fundamental factor in industry's willingness to boost its spending for plants, equipment and inventories.

No one at the policymaking level in Washington will say this publicly, but in private talks many of them admit they welcome the steel move. In Wall Street the approval is unmistakable, but here too the attitude is the less said the better, in view of the politics involved and the steel wage talks. This price development demands much deeper analysis than it has received, though, and here goes.

**On Count One:** The index of industrial materials prices is one of the 12 "leading indicators" selected by the National Bureau of Economic Research as most valuable in forecasting turns in our economy - meaning an upturn in this index usually signals in advance an upturn in the economy and vice versa. This index reached its peak at 104.4 (1957-59 equals 100) back in May 1961, was below 95 last month. Of course, this prolonged slide has been a depressing factor, but now at last prices are firming, the increases are spreading out far beyond steel - an encouraging signal for the economy.

The index of non-food wholesale prices is one of the NBER's nine "coincident" indicators - meaning this index usually turns up or down with the economy as a whole. It hit its high at 100.9 last October, was at 100.5 last month. Now it too is showing signs of turning, more prices are rising than are falling - an encouraging sign of business' health today.

**On Count Two:** If the economy weren't strengthening, the price hikes in steel and other industries wouldn't stick. But the economy is strengthening and most price increases are sticking. The comparative stability of prices during the 27 months of the 1961-63 expansion to date has been extraordinary. The firming of prices now is more typical of an economic upturn - and the implications of this to jobs, paychecks and profits are all on the bright side.

**On Count Three:** Yes, we will pay higher prices for many goods. There's no doubt that the cost of living will reach an all-time peak this year. But while prices of a long list of goods may be moderately higher, the rate of rise in the cost of services has slowed perceptibly and the odds remain that the consumer price index will only creep upward by 1 1/2 per cent or so. If tax reductions lead to sharply increased business and consumer spending next year, the price outlook could change and then action to control inflation would be appropriate. But a clamp-down would not be in order now. Now is the time to encourage our economy to pull off the plateau, not to restrain it.

**On Count Four:** Both industry and the administration handled this steel price boost magnificently - a plus for all of us. The increases are "selective." The laws of supply and demand in the marketplace are operating. The President has not intervened. The industry's profit squeeze has been recognized. Business has been given incentives to invest in plants and equipment, will be given more.

The confidence these facts have created is and will be a vital factor stimulating our growth.

Today's price hikes can't be compared with the spiral of the 1950s. Rather, today's telegraph a renewal of upturn in an economic expansion already at the "old age" of 27 months.



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