

Cat Scratch Disease Resembles Number of Ills, But Not Serious

By ROY O. GILBERT, M.D., L.A. County Health Officer

Among the disorders that the domestic cat may possibly transmit to human beings is the one now known as cat scratch disease. This disease may often mimic tuberculosis, tularemia, infectious mononucleosis, tumors, infected cysts, and a few other maladies. Nevertheless, although it may be troublesome, cat scratch fever is rarely of a serious nature.

Cat scratch disease, frequently transmitted by a perfectly healthy cat, seems to be of recent origin despite the fact that cats have probably

been scratching man since about 3500 B.C.

The possibility that it was a disease distinct from any other was first considered in 1932 by a medical research scientist in Cincinnati who happened to be studying a group of patients ill with suspected tularemia. It was not until 1947, however, that American and French research workers correlated existing medical knowledge on the subject and a new disease entity was apparently recognized. The first known case in the United States occurred in 1951 but, since that date, hundreds of cases have been reported from

both Europe and America. Germ Unidentified

The germ that causes the disease has not yet been identified, but it is thought to be one of the myriad viruses.

Whether it is a feline disease transmitted to man or one in which the cat is just a vehicle of transportation, so to speak, is not yet definitely established either. One report from France states that the particular virus may be widely distributed in plants and vegetable life.

An analysis of 160 cases, reported in an issue of the American Medical Assn. Journal during 1954, revealed that

most of the patients had had contact with cats although no more than 93 reported a cat scratch. In 12 of the cases studied, no contact with a cat was found at all. Over one-third of the patients were under 10 years of age and two-thirds were under 30.

Starts With Lump
Cat scratch fever usually starts with a lump or sore on the skin, followed in a few weeks by inflammation and enlargement of the lymph glands which may become tender or stay comparatively painless. Chills or chilliness, aches and pains, fever and nausea may occur. Sometimes

a rash appears and, if the lymph nodes in the abdomen are involved, abdominal pain may be present.

Fortunately, a specific skin test can be done that will establish the identity of the disease and thus help the physician rule out the more serious disorders and set the patient at ease. The disorder, in the opinion of medical men familiar with it, is not always correctly diagnosed, and this may perhaps explain the relatively small number of cases reported.

The malady is self-limited and disappears of its own accord in several weeks although, in occasional cases, the lymph glands may remain swollen for some months. In some cases, certain of the antibiotics may be helpful.

Behind the Scenes

By REYNOLDS KNIGHT

From now on you're going to hear a lot of confusing talk about the state of business—that is, from now until Election Day. Political bias and objectives will color pronouncements about business.

If you listen to Democrats you probably will hear that unemployment has increased since 1952 to about 2.8 million, from 1.7 million when Truman left office. In rebuttal, Republicans can claim that there are some 66.7 million employed

now as against 61.3 million in 1952.

So we have employment at an all-time high and we have also a rise of 1.1 million in unemployment in the past four years, which gives sides something to say on the subject of economic well-being. Average weekly wages are up, but the cost of living is also edging higher after having held steady through much of the Eisenhower administration.

All of this provides plenty of ammunition for those whose

business it is to take sides and to present viewpoints. If you are a victim of spot unemployment, or you operate a business afflicted by such special conditions, there is no question that economic affairs—for you—are not good. But for the majority and for a broad impartial view—things are "pretty good."

TAKE IT HOME—Take-aways—an important source of retail profits—are on the increase in department stores. It is by encouraging customers, through convenient packaging, to carry home their purchases, that stores are cutting sharply one of their major operating costs. These facts were brought home forcefully at the first packaging clinic held recently by the National Retail Dry Goods Assn.

"The trend to suburban branches has been another element contributing to the fact that take-aways in department stores have risen to an average of 87 per cent of purchases," William J. Alford III, chairman of the public relations committee of the Folding Paper Box Assn., told the clinic.

Alford listed 21 ways by which creative packaging could help department stores boost sales and cut operating costs. He stressed that customers are willing to act as their own salespeople when merchandise is packaged in cartons that contain all necessary selling information and is attractively displayed in attention-getting self-selection fixtures.

THINGS TO COME—A mixture of ground dried beef, dehydrated coconut and marshmallow, all coated with chocolate, may be on the market soon as a nutty-flavored "meat sweet". . . An English manufacturer has designed a pencil-size soldering iron weighing only one ounce. . . And a British auto worker has found an answer to one of the problems of cold weather driving—a warm-hands steering wheel.

POWER STEERING—Power steering, one of the more glamorous developments of the auto industry to capture the public fancy, is going to be standard equipment on a lot of airplanes from now on.

Republic Aviation Corp. has developed a twin system of airplane control which is the equivalent of the automotive power steering and is already building it into its F-84F Thunderstreaks and their reconnaissance sister ships, the RF-84F Thunderflashes. While being fitted initially to Republic's planes, the system is readily adaptable to other aircraft.

The two sets of controls in the system work together automatically when a pilot moves his control stick. The big advantage is that if one system is damaged in battle the other takes over the whole job without any change in the feel or effect of the stick. And, of course, this means greater protection and safety for military pilots themselves as well as their high-speed jet aircraft.

FARM PINCH—Farmers are starting to feel pinched again. Agricultural product prices have commenced to fall after climbing during the first six months of the year. Farm product prices usually slide around harvest time but this drop is too soon to be ascribed to an early harvest. Bearing down on the other handle of the pincher is the squeeze of rising costs; the steel increase has meant hikes in prices of many products essential to the farmer.

However, the government's new soil bank program is taking effect and that will offset the pinch somewhat. The government's goal for this year was a "bank" of 6,000,000 to 15,000,000 acres, withheld to forestall excessive surpluses of basic crops. The latest report of the Department of Agriculture is that more than 12,300,000 acres have been taken out of production under the new program and that almost \$281,000,000 will be paid to growers of corn, wheat, rice, peanuts and tobacco who agreed to withdraw a portion of their land from production. More corn producers than farmers of other commodities signed agreements to "bank" land.

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