

Nerve Gas Effect On Humans, Too

By DREW PEARSON
and JACK ANDERSON

WASHINGTON—The incident of the 6,000 dead sheep in Western Utah has raised the ominous possibility that people, too, may be in danger from chemical and germ warfare experiments.

This column has learned, for example, that the veterinarians who examined the dead sheep have complained of strange symptoms themselves. The Basque sheepherder who had been tending the ill-fated flock also suffered from nausea, headaches, dizziness and diarrhea.

The sheep had been grazing near the Army's Dugway Proving Grounds, where the Army has been testing nerve gas. The suspicion is that the sheep got a whiff of the deadly gas, which somehow seeped out of the test area.

This has caused an urgent reappraisal of the safeguards at other chemical and biological warfare centers. For it is known that the Army is experimenting with paralyzing, odorless gases and deadly mutant microbes in more populated places than the sagebrush country of Western Utah.

RESEARCH IN chemical or germ warfare is going on at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal near Denver; Pine Bluff Arsenal, 40 miles from Little Rock, Ark.; Ft. Dietrich, outside Frederick, Md., 40 miles from the nation's capital; Edgewood Arsenal, Md.; Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.; and a civilian laboratory at Newport, Ind. In addition, 50 research contracts have been granted to various universities.

There are no known antidotes for some of the gases and germs that have been developed. At the Pine Bluff laboratories, for example, bacterial strains have been developed that could cause a national disaster.

In the case of the sheep, the Agriculture Dept. sent two veterinarians from the Utah State Agricultural College, Dr. Kent Van Kampen and Dr. Lynn James, to determine the cause of the mysterious deaths. They performed several autopsies which indicated the sheep had died from disorders of the central nervous system.

Not long afterward, both veterinarians came down with the same symptoms that had afflicted the shepherd.

This startling development was immediately hushed up by the federal officials in charge of the investigation.

Dr. E. E. Solomon, the Agriculture Dept.'s director of animal health, spoke on the phone to his chief veterinarian in Utah, Dr. Jordan Rasmussen, who instructed Drs. Van Kampen and James to keep their symptoms to themselves.

MEANWHILE, Brig. Gen. William Stone of the Army Materiel Command acknowledged to the Utah congressional delegation that the death of the sheep

"right on our doorstep and probably involving a chemical similar to materials we have been testing . . . (makes us) highly suspect."

He argued that if it was a nerve gas that caused the death of the sheep it should have affected people as well. He neglected to tell the congressmen that the shepherd and veterinarians had, in fact, been affected.

The question remains whether the next seepage could leave dead people instead of sheep.

The Defense Dept. has been working on a wide range of germ warfare, most of it very secret.

We can report that a new virus germ has been developed, and Rickettsia strains against which the world has no immunity. This has been accomplished by using chemicals, radiation, ultraviolet light and other agents to produce bacteriological freaks or mutants.

Some are so deadly that universities in the vicinity of the Army's Pine Bluff, Ark., laboratories have been given secret contracts to test the wild life constantly for the slightest sign of escaped virus. Elaborate precautions are taken, of course, to confine the bizarre germs to the labs.

Topekans Were Reading 30 YEARS AGO

(April 1, 1938)

The first Pittsburgh Plate Glass Co. store in Kansas was set to open at 922 Kansas. R. E. Bartow was manager.

Mrs. Joe McHugh, who had taken over the business of her late husband, was not decided whether to tear down the old Santa Fe Depot in North Topeka and sell the material, or to sell the building. Mrs. McHugh's firm was the McHugh Wrecking Co.

The depot had been vacant several years. It formerly was the North Topeka stopping place for the Atchison branch of the Santa Fe.

The Shawnee County Health Dept. had on report for April 1, 58 cases of measles, 18 cases of whooping cough, 12 cases of chicken pox, six scarlet fever, five pneumonia and one each of TB, erysipelas and septic sore throat.

Joe Louis was favored 20-1 to whip Minnesota's Harry Thomas. Louis was 23 years old, Thomas 27.

One of the un-funniest April Fool's Day practical jokes on sale was the "Taxpayers' Reward." When the victim opened the lid of a box, a boot popped out for a kick in the face.

The Republic County courthouse in Belleville was destroyed by fire. The 51-year-old structure had cost \$60,000 to build.

Professional tournament golfers decided they would not play in any match offering less than \$5,000 prize money.