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# Family told move to avoid chemicals

By ELIZABETH PRUITT

A South Roane County family which has had its life severly upset in the past three weeks after chemicals from a leaking transformer enroute past their property discharged several hundred gallons of fluid in the area has been advised by their family doctor to leave their home for the time being.

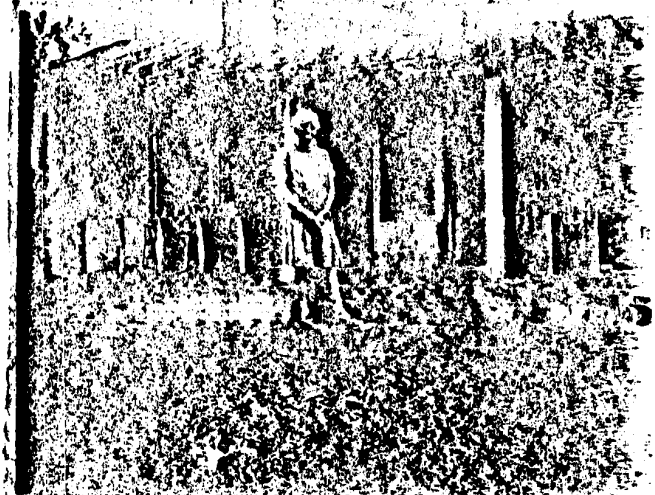
Ralph Hickey was given the advice by his physician yesterday after he was taken to the emergency room at Chamberlain Memorial Hospital in Rockwood suffering from "stomach cramps and nausea" which he said had been caused by the heavy ordor of the contamination of the chemicals in the area.

Meanwhile a full crew of workmen with heavy equipment continue to dig huge holes in the Hickey property and other

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# Transformer contamination still causing concern at farm



Mrs. Hickey stands outside the family home from which they have been advised by their doctor to move until the area is cleared of contamination after members of the family have become ill. (Photo by Liz Pruitt)



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This horse and part of the crew of men which has been moved into the south part of Roane County to move out contaminated soil is headquartered at Mr. Hickey's workshop on his farm. (Photo by Liz Pruitt)



**Workmen continue to dig up the earth on the Ralph Hickey farm off highway 58 south of Kingston where chemicals from a huge transformer being transported along the highway sprang a leak and ran into the area two weeks ago. (Photo by Liz Pruitt)**

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surrounding area and load up the dirt in 55-gallon barrels for shipment to Corpus Christie, Texas, for burial. Hundreds of tons of the contaminated soil have already been trucked out of the area during the nearly two weeks of the operation.

Clearance of the area of the contamination is being done by workmen under supervision of the Environmental Protective Agency of the federal government. Government men come to the area at least twice a week to check the situation according to Mrs. Hickey.

The everyday routine of the Hickey family has been severely altered by the incident. They have continually been told that there is no danger from the chemicals which spilled on the land and then was scattered by heavy rains which hit the area shortly afterward.

But the family has been told not to use water from their 250-foot well which supplied the family water. They are now hauling all their water for a distance of about ½ mile. Last week they found many of their chickens sick and were told not to eat the eggs but instead to burn them.

A new baby was born to one of the Hickey family living about a quarter mile away from the area after the leakage of the chemicals occurred and the family reports that the infant has been having a difficult time breathing and experiencing sickness.

Mrs. Hickey said those in charge at the clean-up operation have continually told them there was no danger to the contamination. The chemical which leaked out of the transformer has been identified Polychlorinated Bipehyls, which is said to be a family of over 200 different chemicals.

Some of the chemical blew into the open window of a car driven by George Galvon as he passed the truck transporting the transformer and he became ill and had to go to Oak Ridge hospital where he remained three days. His doctor consulted a specialist in Pennsylvania who said there was no known antidote for the chemical but to treat it as acute bronchitis. He has not reported any further difficulties.

The trouble began early this month when one of three trucks transporting the three huge transformers of General Electric from Georgia had a blowout on the highway near the Hickey home. The blowout caused the leak in the transformer. Mrs. Hickey said the driver came to her home to use the telephone and called the company to see what to do about it and was advised to drain the several hundred gallons of chemicals from the transformer. Soon thereafter heavy rains began and washed the contamination around the area and nearly two weeks later the digging up of the dirt around the area and shipping out to Texas began. The holes being dug are being filled with gravel.

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