

The first approach to this problem was a vigorous educational program. In 1949, the Division of Industrial Hygiene of the Public Health Service, after a meeting with representatives from the Department of Agriculture and manufacturers of parathion, distributed to the state and local industrial hygiene agencies a warning statement on the dangers of parathion. These agencies, in turn, distributed the statement and other warning bulletins to physicians, local health departments, farmers, and other known users of the insecticide. Visits were then made to industries known to be engaged in packaging or mixing insecticides, and if parathion was one of the ingredients used, appropriate precautionary methods were urged. Several laboratories determined blood cholinesterase levels on exposed workers to ascertain the amount of insecticide in the air breathed. The chemist of the Minnesota Division of Industrial Hygiene developed a method for determining parathion in the air. The California Bureau of Adult Health has under way a study of the extent to which airplane dusting of crops with parathion and other insecticides may endanger the health of both plane pilots and workers in the field.

Although parathion figured prominently in these studies, other insecticides were also subjected to investigation. For example, studies for mercury exposure in the handling of ceresan,[®] used in the treatment of cotton seed, were initiated by the Arkansas Division of Industrial Hygiene, among others. The New York division investigated exposures to high concentrations of paradichlorbenzene used in moth-proofing, in which problems were created by the substance in both wet and dry form.

Environmental Cancer Control.—The participation of the state and local industrial hygiene agencies in environmental cancer control programs is limited at the present time. Several states received grants from the Public Health Service for research activities; among these were California, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and New York. The Bureau of Adult Health and the Chronic Disease Service of the California Department of Health are jointly investigating the occupational aspects of lung cancer to determine what, if any, occupational pattern is characteristic of persons in whom cancer of the lung develops. The Pennsylvania Bureau of Industrial Hygiene established an environmental cancer section, which is making a statistical study and an environmental evaluation of all cancer-caused deaths of males which occurred in the general population in 1947. The Ohio Industrial Hygiene Division completed a comprehensive occupational cancer study in a chromate-manufacturing plant. The New York Division of Industrial Hygiene and Safety Standards, in cooperation with the New York State Occupational Cancer Committee and various interested groups, has studied occupational exposures of more than 1,000 cancer patients in an effort to acquire needed scientific evidence concerning known and suspected carcinogenic agents in the working environment. And, finally, several state agencies are participating in a study of the chromate-manufacturing industry currently being conducted by the Public Health Service.

Other Environmental Services.—The prevalence of occupational diseases in most states may be difficult to determine, but the evidence brought to light by the various field studies leaves little doubt that the suppression of these diseases is far from a reality. Several facts account for this situation. The preventive knowledge exists, but there are many industrial plants in which it has not been applied. Furthermore,