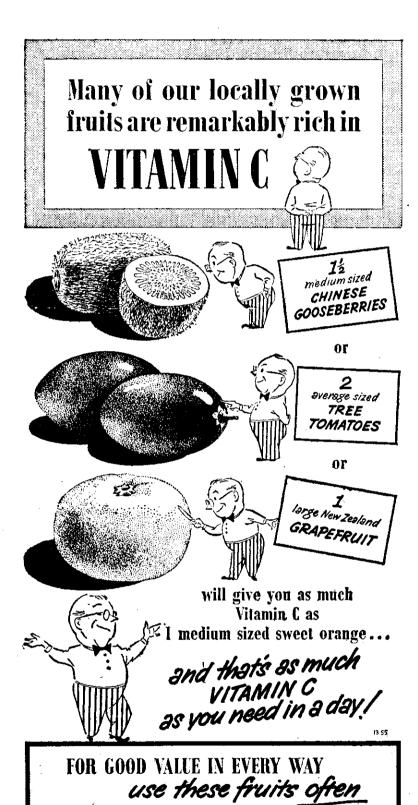
## THE NEW ZEALAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



## Insect Bites

WE in New Zealand hardly appreciate the power that insects have over mankind. In the mass they constitute the largest aggregation of living substance on this earth. I doubt if you realise how lucky we are here. No loss of crops from locusts, no plague from flies, no typhus from lice, no malaria from mosquitoes, no disease spread by sandflies, no yaws spread by flies. Except from flies we have no health problems from those insects so common in our land. They all, however, have nuisance value.

Sandflies go through the early stages of their development in running water and their larvae may be found attached to rocks. They are good fliers, up to a few miles from their breeding places. They are bloodsuckers, and this is why they are such a pest alongside a great many of our natural beauty spots, particularly near rocky or gravelly-bottomed lake or river-sides. The bite soon draws your attention, for there is more sting to it than to that of the mosquito. A hard raised lump follows, which in some people takes a long while to disappear, even weeks occasionally.

Mosquitoes also breed in water, but they prefer still ponds or swamps or pools or artificial collections of water such as in old tins, or backwaters or very slowly, hardly moving, edges of lakes and sluggish streams. If mosquitoes plague you in your home in the warm months, get out and look for the breeding places near by, probably in your own place. For example, an hotel was so inhabited by night-biting mosquitoes that the guests complained. The health inspector found the breeding place in the water cisterns on the roof; draining, refilling and covering ended the nuisance. Any old tins or motor tyres lying about, uncovered water tanks, anything left lying for a while which may hold water—these are the things to look for as the source of mosquito breeding, when you can't ascribe it to near-by ponds or pools. If these last are not used for water supplies, they can be oil treated or stocked with small fish to control the nuisance. This small fish method was used to control the big stagnant pool that existed in the foundation excavations just behind Parliament Buildings.

Mosquito bites annoy most people, and really upset some. The trouble comes from sensitisation in such people. After their first series of bites they become allergic. Thereafter, on encountering mosquito bites, they get an immediate red raised lump, itchy enough, which subsides quickly, and may disappear within an hour. A day later there is a very irritating, itchy reaction that lasts for several days. A few unfortunates get large swellings, with blisters and septic spots, following mosquito bites.

The best immediate treatment of sandfly or mosquito bites is calamine lotion, applied frequently and very freely. You can buy expensive antihistamine creams, but they won't be any more soothing than calamine lotion. If you are allergic to sandfly or mosquito bites, and planning summer holidays where these abound, pack calamine lotion for treatment, and use a dimethyl phthalate application which your chemist has as a repellant, dabbing this



This is the text of a talk on health broadcast recently from ZB, YA and YZ stations of the NZBS by DR. H. B. TURBOTT, Deputy-Director-General of Health

over skin that is exposed, and on to clothes. It gives protection for a few hours.

The bee, wasp and hornet season is here. The bee leaves the sac or stump of its sting in the skin. If this is squeezed, more poison is driven in. With a flat edge, such as the back of a knife or scissor blade, you get the sting out with a crossways lateral sweep. Then apply ammonia, washing blue, or bicarbonate of soda. Don't rub this in, but dab on freely.

The wasp doesn't leave the sting in the skin, but, as those who have suffered know, plenty of poison is injected. This poison contains a chemical with a long name, hyaluronidase, and in addition, a nice lashing of histamine. In reaction, it is either neutral or alkaline. So the ammonia or washing blue does little good, and for a wasp sting you would dab on vinegar or lemon juice—or as some Aucklanders do, bandage on a cut lemon. Vinegar or lemon juice is also good treatment for ant bites, should your children be allergic to these.

A few unfortunates become so sensitised to bee or wasp stings that they have extensive swelling reaction and general shock. Even a first sting of a bee or wasp inside the mouth can do this. For such, call the doctor immediately, and when the immediate trouble is over discuss with him the matter of desensitisation against bee or wasp stings through a course of injections.

## Magnificent Obsession

THE story of Magnificent Obsession is fairly well known-Lloyd C. Douglas's book was a best seller, and the film of the same name was a great success. Even so, in serial form, it should attract a great deal of attention. When the wealthy playboy, Bob Merrick, indirectly causes the death of Helen Phillips's husband, he tries to erase the memory by his attentions to Helen. Trying to escape Merrick's insistence, Helen is run down by a car and the accident leaves her blind. Merrick's only friend, an artist named Randolph, tells him the secret of a mysterious power to bring happiness and success to troubled people, and Merrick starts on the long road of medical study, which ultimately leads to his success as a brain surgeon. Years later he finds Helen near death, and performs an operation which saves her life and cures her blindness.

Those taking part in the serial, which starts from ZB stations on November 3, are Lyndall Barbour, Richard Davies, Judith Godden, Wynne Nelson and Don Pascoa