

2 COMPANIES HALT SALK-SHOT OUTPUT

Seek to Eliminate a Monkey
Virus, Believed Harmless,
Found in Some Vaccine

SHORTAGE IS DOUBTED

Recent Supplies Checked by
U. S. for Infective Agent
Before Being Released

WASHINGTON, July 25 (AP)
—Two of the five big compa-
nies that make Salk polio vac-
cine have halted production un-
til they can eliminate a monkey
virus that turned up in some of
their output.

This was disclosed today by
the United States Public Health
Service, which said that there
was no evidence that the mon-
key virus was dangerous to hu-
man beings.

The service said that the
shutdown in the two plants—
which turn out about 25 per
cent of the nation's vaccine
supply—was not expected to
create a shortage of the vac-
cine.

Vaccine in doctors' hands is
not being withdrawn. But the
Health Service said all Salk
vaccine released during the last
two months had been tested
and only that found to be free
of the virus had been released
for general use.

Under restrictions of law, the
service did not name the con-
cerns. But it has become known
that they are the Merck, Sharp
& Dohme division of Merck &
Co. and Parke, Davis & Co.

Halt in Output Confirmed

A spokesman for Merck,
Sharp & Dohme in Philadelphia
confirmed that his company had
halted its production of the vac-
cine.

Saying none of the vaccine in
physicians' hands had been re-
called, he added:

"But we don't want some-
thing in our vaccine that we
don't know everything about, so
we stopped production to get it
out. We hope to have it licked
in several weeks."

The virus, labeled SV40, is a
newly discovered one. It came
from monkey tissue. Salk vac-
cine is made by growing the
polio virus on monkey kidney
tissue.

The Health Service said that
monkey virus was known to
multiply in man under certain
conditions but there was no evi-
dence that small amounts, when
introduced through the vaccine,
produced illness in man.

Isolated a Year Ago

The service said the monkey
virus was first isolated in June,
1960. Merck, Sharp & Dohme
credited the discovery to its re-
searcher, Dr. Maurice R. Hille-
man.

The Health Service said there
was indirect evidence that the
virus had been in at least some
of the Salk vaccine used in
previous years, but added:

"Careful clinical observation
made over the years on selected
groups of persons who have re-
ceived Salk vaccine and care-
ful surveillance of the general
population, moreover, have in-
dicated that no untoward ef-
fects can be attributed to the
use of the vaccine which might
have contained SV40."

Similarly, the spokesman for
Merck, Sharp & Dohme said
that the virus could have been
in a great deal of the vaccine
over the last year. But, he said,
there was no way of knowing
for certain.

"If we know about a virus
we can inactivate it, but no-
body knew about this one until
Hilleman found it present in
trace amounts in some lots,"
he said.