

WHAT IS SAFETY?

Lord Cohen of Birkenhead is reported (*East Anglian Daily Times*—April 21) to have said at a meeting in Liverpool that:

“...the safety of the Salk vaccine had been established without a doubt: 50,000,000 doses had been given in Britain during the last four years and there had been no cases of polio attributable to the vaccination.”

Turning to *The Medical Officer* for the same date (April 21) one finds on page 235, in a letter from the Divisional Medical Officer, Accrington, the following:

“...I have just met with the first case of provocation paralysis in my immediate experience. This was a child, a member of a large family, who was given an injection by her general practitioner in the left deltoid, and some 10 days later developed paralysis of this arm. *No cases of the disease were occurring in the neighbourhood* at that time. Several older children in the family had previously been immunised. On investigation we have recovered the virus from the faeces of another child in the family who is free from any clinical signs. As I see it, the sequence here is that the virus was present in the family and the needle has determined the onset of the disease in the child affected.”

Be it noted that Accrington is only about 40 miles distant from Liverpool.

Such a coincidence. And *such* a small world! !

—*The Layman Speaks*, Aug., '61
