

the colour of the dienone was discharged (4–5 hr). The solvent was removed and the product worked up as described for X. The compound (XI, XIa) was finally crystallised from benzene-petroleum (40–60°), yield (1.4 g) 25%, m p. 265–70° and gave satisfactory C, H analysis.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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## NEWS

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### GENE THERAPY: EXAGGERATED HOPES?

... "Last fall when activist Jeremy Rifkin tried to convince the Natl. Insts. of Health [NIH] to ban all interspecies gene transfers, the loudest protests came, surprisingly, not from the scientific community but from members of the public who knew someone suffering from genetic disease. . . . J. Michael and Christina L Downard of Athens, Ohio, wrote: 'As parents of two daughters afflicted with metachromatic leukodystrophy (MLD), we are only too aware of the possible consequences of any interruption in this work. . . . The Downard's letter was accompanied by more than 250 other letters. . . . More troubling to many observers today than exaggerated fears of gene therapy are exaggerated hopes. (NIH's Recombinant-DNA Advisory Committee [RAC] members were amazed, for example, by the number of letters they received on behalf of the Downard family's

two children with MLD. Yet MLD is not a disease likely to be treatable by gene therapy anytime in the foreseeable future. This disease acts on its victim's brain, and researchers have not come close to figuring out how to get transplanted genes to move from bone marrow cells to brain cells. So far these researchers have resisted any public pressure to bring gene therapy out of the laboratory before it is ready. 'I think investigators have been very responsible in allowing the guideline formulation process to go forward,' says LeRoy Walters [Georgetown U. and RAC]."

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