

PUBLIC HEALTH

Depression Victims Have More Illness Than Chronically Poor

Survey Shows Sickness More Widespread Among Families Stricken Since 1929 Than in Always-Impooverished Classes

VICTIMS of the depression, families that have become impoverished since 1929, have had much more sickness than the "chronically poor" whose poverty dates back of 1929.

This is one of the findings of a survey, conducted jointly by the U. S. Public Health Service and the Milbank Memorial Fund, to determine the effect of the depression on health. A preliminary report of the survey was made by G. St. J. Perrott and Dr. Selwyn D. Collins of the U. S. Public Health Service to the American Public Health Association.

Cities and Villages

The survey was made in poor districts of Detroit, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Syracuse, New York City, Brooklyn, Baltimore, Birmingham, coal mining camps near Morgantown, W. Va., and cotton mill villages near Greenville, S. C. Slum areas were not included. Information as to amount of illness and family incomes before and since 1929 was obtained from almost every family in the areas investigated.

A relatively large drop in economic status appears to be associated with a large incidence of illness, the investigators found. No conclusions as to the broad implication of the findings can be made yet, since the survey has been completed in only five of the cities: Birmingham, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Syracuse and Greenville, S. C. Thus far, the figures show that those who were in reasonably comfortable circumstances before 1929 but have since dropped to comparative poverty suffered 55 per cent. more illness than their more fortunate neighbors who were in the same economic status in 1929 but had had no drop by 1932.

Families of the unemployed had 46 per cent. more illness than families whose heads were full time wage earners; families having part time workers only had 28 per cent. more illness than families whose heads were full time wage earners. This was true in each city

as well as in the whole group.

The extra illness among the depression poor was not limited to children or very old people. The sick rate was higher at all ages among the unemployed than in families having full or part time workers.

Most of the extra illness was caused by the respiratory diseases such as coughs, colds, influenza and the like. The unemployed and their families suffered much more from these ailments than did their more fortunate neighbors, but they also had more of every other kind of sickness.

However, while the children of the unemployed had more colds, coughs and respiratory diseases than their neighbors, they did not have as much whooping cough, measles and other epidemic diseases of childhood as did the children in more comfortable economic circumstances. The reason for this has not yet been ascertained.

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MEDICINE

Oxygen Tube Replaces Tents and Rooms

DESIGNED to supplant oxygen tents and oxygen rooms in the treatment of patients suffering from oxygen lack, an oxygen tube has been developed at the State of Wisconsin General Hospital, Madison, by Dr. Ralph M. Waters and Dr. E. A. Rovenstine.

The advantages of the new apparatus over the old lies in economy and facility of handling, it is claimed. A small flexible tube is inserted into one nostril of a patient. The tube lies against the back wall of the throat. It is tipped near the opening of the windpipe, and is held in place by adhesive tape on the patient's lip.

The free end of the tube is attached to a humidifier and a meter, which are, in turn, attached to the tank of oxygen. The meter permits a careful regulation of the flow of oxygen, and the humidi-

fier adds the precise amount of moisture needed.

Thus the enriched atmosphere supply can be controlled entirely without depending upon the natural humidity of the air at any one time. Such an apparatus can be kept in readiness by even the smallest hospital, removing the necessity of having expensive oxygen rooms and oxygen tents. The actual cost of oxygen administered would be greatly decreased, making it more available to the poor class of patients, to whom it is now often denied.

The new method would also allow for proper nursing and feeding of the patients during the administration of the oxygen, a practice that is made difficult by the use of oxygen tents.

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METEOROLOGY

Weathermen Unwittingly Pose Hallowe'en Picture

See Front Cover

NOT ANCIENT warlocks making weather but modern scientists just making a record of it, unintentionally posed a good Hallowe'en picture on the top of Mount Washington, with the aid of a cat that doesn't like wind. The photograph has nothing of the mellowness of autumn about it—quite naturally, since it was taken during the winter, when Polar Year studies were being conducted on what is perhaps the windiest mountain-top in eastern North America. So violent are the gusts there at times that a witch could easily take a sky-ride on a broomstick without invoking any supernatural aid at all.

The cat, which injects such a decided Brocken-note into the scene, lacks one element necessary for the conventional witch-picture: a puffed-out tail. The Mt. Washington mascot is a Manx.

To our ancestors, even this would have strengthened the suggestion of the infernal, for in Shakespeare's England it was commonly believed that a witch could change herself into any animal she liked, but that the beast's tail would always be lacking. The first Witches' Scene in *Macbeth* contains such an allusion:

"But thither in a sieve I'll sail,
And like a rat without a tail
I'll do, and I'll do, and I'll do!"

The photograph was made by Winston H. Pote who has obtained a number of excellent pictures of the observatory activities. (See SNL, Aug. 12, 1933)

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