



BIG BAD WOLF

from wandering pigs to over-inquisitive raccoons and bait-stealing skunks, often fire the flash, wasting all the work of a night's set-up. The apparatus itself may "go haywire" due to moisture, corrosion, or mechanical accidents.

But patience, and everlasting willingness to try it again every time something goes wrong, in the end bring their reward, in the shape of first-class pictures of the Big Bad Wolf.

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PUBLIC HEALTH

## Increase in Malaria Deaths; Millions of Cases Estimated

### Any Community Can Now Rid Itself of This Disease Yet It Has Been Allowed to Spread Despite Drainage

**D**EATHS from malaria are increasing to an alarming extent in the United States. The seriousness of the situation is pointed out by officers of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, who refer to "the rising menace of malaria." (*Statistical Bulletin*, Oct., 1935). According to their estimates, at least 900,000 persons are suffering from this preventable disease at the present time.

This estimate is far too low, in the opinion of Dr. L. L. Williams of the U. S. Public Health Service, who is in charge of the service's malaria investigations. Dr. Williams estimates that there were two million cases of malaria in 16 southern states during 1934. He thinks the number of cases has dropped off a little since the 1934 peak, but the 1935

figures will not be available until the end of the year.

The number of cases is not known exactly, but is calculated from the deaths reported. Some authorities estimate 200 cases for every death, but Dr. Williams believes 500 to 1,000 cases for each death is more nearly accurate. Malaria accounted for 4,520 deaths in the United States during 1934, latest year for which figures are available.

The deaths and untold suffering caused by this disease can be prevented. On this point the editor of the *Statistical Bulletin* states:

"It is an indisputable fact that any community can now rid itself of every trace of this disease if it so desires. All that is necessary is the application of

the principles laid down by General Gorgas in his work in Cuba and the Panama Canal Zone more than 30 years ago."

The general impoverishment of the people since the depression has been blamed by some for the alarming increase of malaria in the South. The feeling is that people have been too poor to buy quinine or other anti-malaria remedies. On the other hand, it is pointed out that most of these states have had considerable CWA and FERA assistance for their drainage programs and this should have helped to offset the unfavorable effects of the depression.

Dr. Williams explains, however, that malaria rises and falls in curves which reach peaks of high malaria prevalence every seven years. In 1934 the biggest peak in 25 years was reached, Dr. Williams thinks.

"Malaria is not a static thing," he said. "It ebbs and flows like the tides."

When the curve goes up, malaria also spreads geographically, cases and outbreaks occurring in the regions that usually have none at all.

In 1934, for instance, there were small epidemics in New Jersey, Ohio and Michigan. In addition, more people in malarial regions have the disease, they are sicker and the number of small epidemics increases. It is from observations of these conditions as well as from death rates that the U. S. Public Health Service officials make their estimates of the amount of malaria in the country.

A drop in malaria, beginning about now, is expected by Dr. Williams because he figures it is time for the curve to start its natural downward course and also because of the tremendous amount of drainage work done under the WPA. Twenty thousand miles of main outlet ditch have already been completed and about that much more will be dug before the program is over.

Most of the malaria cases in the country are in southern Virginia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, the western half of Tennessee, the western tip of Kentucky, the southern tip of Illinois, southwestern Missouri, Arkansas, the southeastern quarter of Oklahoma, Louisiana, the eastern third of Texas, and the Rio Grande valley of New Mexico. In addition, there is always a little malaria in San Joaquin Valley, Cal., and the Willamette Valley, Ore. These last two malaria centers, however, do not give health authorities much concern as the disease is neither very severe there nor does it spread from there to other regions.

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