

## MEDICINE

# Employers, Relief Agencies Urged to Help Fight TB

**E**MLOYERS and relief agencies were urged to join in the fight against tuberculosis. With their aid, thousands of cases of the disease can be discovered and given much-needed treatment, Dr. A. A. Pleyte of Milwaukee told members of the National Tuberculosis Association at their meeting in Milwaukee.

He and his associates, Harold Holand and Metta Bean, reported that during 1935 over 1,000,000 children in the United States were tuberculin tested under organized auspices and perhaps as many more were tuberculin tested by private physicians.

"Nevertheless," Dr. Pleyte said, "few cases of tuberculosis among children are actually found. The years 5 to 18, relatively speaking, are an island of safety from tuberculosis."

The situation is quite different at higher age levels. The relief population and men in industry make up a smaller population than that of the primary and secondary schools but Dr. Pleyte estimates that these two groups have six times or more the number of active cases of tuberculosis and a tuberculosis death rate from four to eight times that of school children.

The methods of mass testing with tuberculin and X-rays which have proved effective in finding tuberculosis in children should now be applied to finding it in these adult groups, the Milwaukee investigators urged. Such tests, they believe, should be extended until all persons over 20 years of age are X-rayed at least once a year.

"Success in reaching these large groups of apparently healthy adults," Dr. Pleyte said, "will depend largely on how well employers and relief agencies can be pressed into service, as school authorities

have already, as allies of the tuberculosis agencies in the organized anti-tuberculosis fight."

Tuberculosis is increasing at an alarming rate among nursing and medical students in several parts of the world, Dr. J. Arthur Myers, University of Minnesota professor, told the meeting.

## Medical Students Hit

"In some places it has been observed that the infection attack rate among student nurses, as manifested by the tuberculin test, is 100 times as great as among girls in the same vicinity in the general population," Dr. Myers said. "While we have been priding ourselves over the marked decrease in the incidence of positive tuberculin reactors among children and young adults throughout most of this nation, we have tolerated a situation that has permitted students of nursing and medicine to become infected with tubercle bacilli at a rate no less than probably existed in the general population a century ago."

Doctors now know, Dr. Myers pointed out, that tuberculosis will attack anyone at any age whenever sufficiently exposed to the infection. The remedy for the alarming situation among students of medicine and nursing, Dr. Myers said, is to take greater precautions to protect these students from the infection in the patients they are attending. This means instituting the same strict technic in tuberculosis nursing that is observed for patients suffering from other contagious diseases such as scarlet fever and diphtheria. The patients themselves, he declared, will be more than willing to cooperate and will benefit from seeing this technic practiced.

## Silicosis Lets TB Spread

When tuberculosis develops in a patient suffering from silicosis, the lung disease due to inhalation of a silica-laden dust, the tuberculosis is apt to spread to other organs of the body from the lungs, Drs. William M. Kinney of Joplin, Mo., and Jesse E. Douglass of Webb City, Mo., reported.

Three cases of silicosis in which tuberculosis subsequently developed and spread to the heart lining were reported in detail by the Missouri doctors to il-

lustrate their opinion. The tuberculosis spread by a different route from heart to lungs in each of these cases. Other similar cases were also found.

Most usual route of the spread of the tuberculosis, they believe, is through the lymphatic nodes which are generally involved in silicosis.

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## FORESTRY

## Salt-Seasoning Method Improves Poor Lumber

**S**ALT seasoning methods developed at the U. S. Forest Products Laboratory, Madison, Wis., promise to increase the nation's forest capital by converting species now considered weed trees to valued potential building and cabinet lumber.

The method is a simple one. The green wood is immersed in a bath of common house salt, baking soda, borax or one of several other solutions worked out by the laboratory, then air- or kiln-dried. Types of lumber that have defied all previously tried curing methods yield to the new technique.

Formerly it took a year or more to air-dry 6 by 12 inch Douglas fir to a moisture content of 15 per cent at Madison, and during the drying, surface cracks penetrate to an average depth of 1 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches. By the new salt-treatment method, timbers were dried to the same moisture content in 34 days, including eight days in the salt-treating tank and 26 days in a dry kiln. The cracks were confined to knots; otherwise the timbers were perfect.

Because wood dries from the inside out when chemically seasoned it is impossible for it to surface-check or crack in drying. In ordinary seasoning, wood dries from the outside in, and often checks.

*Science News Letter, June 26, 1937*

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