

PUBLIC HEALTH

## Plague Epidemic Is Possible For U.S. Under War Stress

American Medical Association Warns of Consequences Without Careful Integration of Plague Control Work

**A** WARNING that the United States may have a plague epidemic to combat is issued by the American Medical Association through an editorial in its journal. (Aug. 2)

While typhus is being held in check only with the greatest difficulty in Europe and may have reached epidemic proportions in Poland and the Balkans, the AMA pronouncement declares that "no doubt plague, as far as this country is concerned, is a problem of greater potentiality."

Plague is present on the Pacific coast, not as human cases, but in fleas of rats, ground squirrels, and marmots. From these sources it is feared that the dread disease can spread to cause an epidemic in humans when conditions are suitable.

Long-continued and careful plague

control, involving ratproofing of buildings, trapping, poisoning and examinations of dead rodents, must be practiced in any area in which plague has appeared.

The consequences may be tragic, the

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## Health Service Sends Experts To Scene of Sleeping Sickness

**A**N EXPERT on epidemics, Dr. James P. Leake, has been sent to North Dakota by the U. S. Public Health Service to watch developments in the outbreak of sleeping sickness (encephalitis) there.

AMA warns, if there is not a careful integration of the plague control activities of cities, counties, states and the federal government, with the use of trained personnel and adequate funds.

The four horsemen of the apocalypse, war, hunger, disease and death, travel with the increased speed of mechanized transportation, it is pointed out. Sudden and widespread outbreaks of disease arising from hidden infections are more likely than ever. The insulation of this country from the disease consequences of war will prove a colossal task and will require the most careful planning and effort.

*Science News Letter, August 9, 1941*

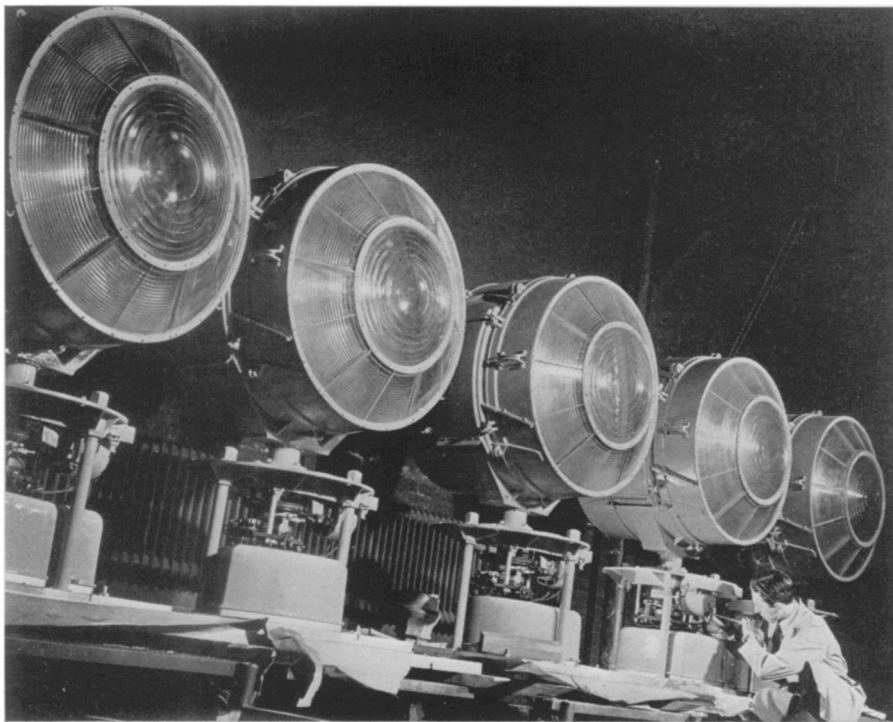
A sharp increase in the number of cases to 65 for the week ending July 26 was reported to the Health Service. This is more than double the number reported for the previous week—31.

W. L. Jellison, an entomologist, was also sent to North Dakota from the Hamilton, Mont., laboratory of the U. S. Public Health Service, to investigate reports of an increase in the number of mosquitoes at the scene of the sleeping sickness outbreak. It is not known that mosquitoes have anything to do with the spreading of sleeping sickness, but since the carrier of the disease is still unidentified, the possibility will be thoroughly explored.

The number of cases of infantile paralysis in the United States is also climbing, reports received in Washington indicate. The total number of cases for the week ending July 26 was 302 as compared with 246 for the previous week and 187 for the week before that.

Nearly half (45%) of the infantile paralysis cases were reported from two states, Alabama and Georgia. In Georgia, however, there was a slight decrease to 79 cases from 91 the previous week. In Alabama, the number increased from 46 to 58.

Although 71% of all the infantile paralysis cases were in the South Atlantic and East-South-Central part of the United States there was some increase in the northern states and four cases were reported in New England where in previous weeks there was none.



**AIRWAY "LIGHT BUOYS"**

*These 36-inch, double end rotating beacons, coming off the production line at the Cleveland, Ohio, Lighting Division of the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company, are to guide night-flying pilots. Each beacon throws a 1,800,000-candle power beam in two directions simultaneously that can be seen, on clear nights, for 20 miles.*