

PUBLIC HEALTH

Doctors Scarce at Home

The shortage of doctors for civilians is expected to continue unless the Army and Navy revise their requirements. Thus far health on the home front is in good shape.

► "THE SHORTAGE of doctors for civilian practice will continue to increase indefinitely unless the requirements of the armed forces are revised," the Office of War Information declared in a report of facts from the U. S. Public Health Service, the War Manpower Commission and the Federal Works Agency.

Civilian health so far, however, is in good shape "despite critical shortages at many points in the medical defenses of the nation."

The lowest death rate on record for 1942 and a decrease in maternal and infant mortality in spite of an increased birth rate in the same year give a rosy color to the health picture. So do the below-peacetime average cases of influenza and typhoid fever in 1942, normally danger points under war conditions.

A more somber color to the picture of the nation's health appears from the slightly less favorable general death rate this year; the infantile paralysis epidemic and the sharp increase in meningitis; the flareups of smallpox, and the sporadic outbreaks of food poisoning and dysenteries; and the statistics on a sampling of workers, concerning sicknesses which caused absences of longer than eight days, showing an increased number of man-days lost, especially from respiratory sickness, which include colds, influenza, pneumonia and so on.

The predicted indefinitely continued doctor shortage for civilians arises from two facts:

1. The armed forces have so far commissioned only a little more than 80% of their stated needs and are continuing to withdraw physicians from civilian practice.

2. Eighty per cent of all new medical graduates will be commissioned. This leaves 1,500 new doctors for civilians unless the armed forces take more than 80% of new graduates, and 1,500, OWI points out, would supply only about half the number needed to replace the 2,500 to 3,000 doctors who die in the average peace-time year.

"Although it is logical to expect a larger number of deaths in war years from the strains of overwork," the OWI

statement continues, "there is no evidence of this to date."

The U. S. Public Health Service and the Procurement and Assignment Service of the War Manpower Commission are attempting to compensate for the doctor shortage in the following ways:

1. Surveys to show where needs are acute. 2. Attempts to shift doctors from well-supplied to medically needy areas. 3. Limiting recruitment to 20 states and the District of Columbia which are relatively well supplied with doctors. 4. Helping local authorities to organize cooperative use of doctors and facilities. 5. Improving and increasing hospital and clinical facilities. 6. Continuing attempts to improve sanitary conditions. 7. Extensive work to control the spread of venereal disease. 8. Widespread case-finding work in tuberculosis.

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INVENTION

Modified Windshield Wiper Invented for Eyeglasses

► MILLIONS of Americans have, perhaps, been waiting for an invention such as that of Isidor Greenfield, Brooklyn, N. Y., who has put a modified windshield wiper on eyeglasses. He has received patent No. 2,329,757 on his device which would banish the annoyance of taking off eyeglasses to clean fogged or dirty lenses.

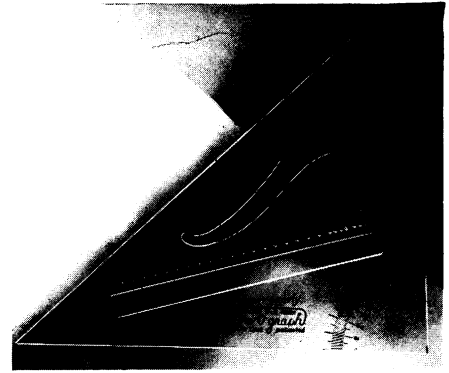
The simple, inexpensive wiper can be quickly attached to, or removed from, the top of the spectacle frames; two legs of springy wire extending downward are covered with a glass-cleaning material. When rotated, the unit wipes the lenses on both sides.

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BACTERIOLOGY

Agar Supply Sufficient For Bacteriological Use

► THANKS to production of agar on the Pacific Coast and to careful use of the quantities available, America has enough agar for the essential bacteri-



VERSATILE — This draftsman's tool, made of "Lumarith," includes among other features markings for a ten-inch rule; a straight edge; angles of 15, 30, 45, 60, 75 and 90 degrees; a French curve; graduation markings; and holes for use in drawing parallel lines.

ological media needed in medical laboratories.

This jelly-like substance made from seaweed was a Japanese product before the war, but agar of bacteriological grade is now being successfully extracted from seaweed of our Pacific Coast. A WPB limitation order prevents the use of the limited supply for industrial, food or therapeutic purposes.

A new agar industry on the Atlantic Coast is getting underway but so far its product is not suitable for bacteriological use. There is hope that in the near future we may again be having meringue for pies made from material contained in seaweed.

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