

PUBLIC HEALTH

# Leprosy Expected

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► A SMALL NUMBER of those serving in the armed forces in foreign countries where leprosy is prevalent will become its victims, two authorities on leprosy predict (*Journal, American Medical Association*, Dec. 9).

The authorities making this prediction, which they term a "safe" one, are Dr. Ralph Hopkins, consulting dermatologist at the U. S. Marine Hospital, Carville, La., and emeritus professor of diseases of the skin, Tulane University, and Dr. C. H. Faget, medical officer in charge of the Carville institution which is better known as the National Leprosarium.

Their prediction is based on experience from the Spanish-American War. Thirty-two veterans of that war have been admitted to the Carville hospital. All of them presumably contracted the disease in foreign countries. The 51 veterans of World War I and the 10 veterans of World War II already admitted to the institution, however, probably all contracted leprosy before induction into military service. They came from states or countries in which the disease is prevalent.

Of the 723 patients admitted to the Leprosarium between July, 1928, and January, 1944, the period covered by the current report, one-fifth or 20% have been released conditionally. They have the disease in arrested form and are no longer a menace to the public health.

Of 16 new kinds of treatments tried, "best results with least harmful effects were produced by promin and diasone," the two physicians report. Promin and diasone have been hailed as promising treatments for tuberculosis but have not yet been accepted as proved remedies for that condition.

They are still considered experimental also in leprosy. Other experimental treatments for the leprosy patients included penicillin, four kinds of sulfa drugs, diphtheria toxoid, pooled human blood plasma and fever treatment in the Kettering fever cabinet.

Yearly admissions of patients to the Leprosarium have shown some shifts during the period studied. Nearly three times as many now come from Texas as

formerly and the yearly average admissions are greater from this state than from any other. Louisiana, with the next highest number of average yearly admissions, has a few less than formerly.

The decline in admissions from Minnesota and Massachusetts warrants the belief that the disease is not indigenous in those states and that the foci established by immigration have disappeared or are disappearing.

From California and Florida, on the other hand, there are enough native born patients admitted each year to argue for the disease having been established there, although there are also evidences of imported cases.

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## Keep Up Guard Against Danger of Shipyard Eye

► THOSE OF YOU who live in industrial areas must continue to keep alert to the danger of shipyard eye, warns Dr.

Hedwig Kuhn in her book, *Industrial Ophthalmology*. This book, published by the C. V. Mosby Co., is written for physicians specializing in treatment of eye diseases. There are, however, many things in it of interest to all of us.

Shipyard eye is known medically as epidemic keratoconjunctivitis. It is, as you may know, a very "catching" disease. It is not limited to shipyards and workers in them, as its popular name might suggest. It struck its first heavy blow at the shipyards about two years ago but has also appeared in such industrial centers as Schenectady, Buffalo, Detroit, Milwaukee and Chicago.

If you have not been hearing of any cases lately, that means that doctors, public health authorities and plant management have been taking great care to prevent outbreaks of the disease. These efforts must continue and citizens in industrial areas must continue to help because, in the opinion of Major Murray Sanders, who has studied the disease intensively, shipyard eye is here to stay.

Doctors are "not yet equipped with an effective weapon for cure of this condition," Dr. Kuhn states. "Because of this there is only one method of procedure and that is prevention."

Be suspicious of red, watering eyes that feel as if they had something in them. Such eyes should be seen at once by an eye doctor. Anyone who touches such eyes or the skin around them, to



**WATERPROOF JEEP**—The engine of this jeep is protected by a plastic to guard against damage while crossing the stream.