



NEW-TYPE PATIENTS' ROOM—This spacious home-like room at the Clinical Center of the National Institutes of Health is actually a hospital room. The beds are easily made ready for sleeping and the colorful decoration makes it seem less like a hospital.

major health problems of the nation: brain and nervous and mental diseases, cancer, arthritis, heart and blood vessel diseases.

To be sure, there are in the nation other hospitals where research is carried out on these diseases. But most of the great medical research centers of the nation and of the world admit patients primarily because they are sick people needing medical attention. While they are being treated, they may also be subjects of study in the staff scientists' search for better ways to conquer disease.

At the Clinical Center, however, the study will be primary, care of the patients secondary in a sense, although this care will be the best that can be given. But the patients will be admitted because they all have the same disease—whatever one the scientists have decided to study. And they will all have the same stage of the disease. They must all be as nearly alike as possible in age, weight, sex and other physical characteristics.

Since it will take time to find 500 such almost peas-in-a-pod patients all suffering from the same stage of the same disease, many of the Clinical Center's 500 beds will be empty for some time to come. No more than 15 or 20 patients were expected in Bethesda by July 6.

Those 15 or 20 and the ones to follow will become members of a research team working under unique conditions which, it is hoped, will speed discovery of cures or preventives of diseases that afflict millions.

The dedication speech was delivered by Mrs. Oveta Culp Hobby, Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, of which the Public Health Service is a division. The center, she said, will house "the widest array of specialists and technicians" that has been assembled to work in pure and applied science.

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ORNITHOLOGY

Clever Cuckoos Cage Meals From Bossy

➤ BY LETTING a cow do the work, cuckoos in El Salvador feed on three grasshoppers where one was caught before, reports Dr. Austin L. Rand, curator of birds at the Chicago Natural History Museum.

Watching a group of indolent but clever cuckoos feed at the feet of cows stirring up insects as they grazed, Dr. Rand came up with the following statistics:

During the dry season, it took an average of two minutes for a bird to find an insect without the aid of a cow. With bossy, however, the bird could average three entrees in the same period of time.

During the lush wet season, pickings were better. An alert bird could catch three or four insects a minute unaided. But, again with bossy, the score mounted to five or six a minute.

Owls are not the only wise birds, statistics seem to show.

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AERONAUTICS

Pilots Can Hang Onto This New Supersonic Hat

See Front Cover

➤ A NEW helmet, shown on the cover of this week's SCIENCE NEWS LETTER, has been created for Air Force pilots who some day may have to bail out of supersonic planes.

The helmet, custom built to fit each wearer, was designed by Douglas Aircraft engineers, Santa Monica, Calif., to stay on the pilot's head during bailouts. Present-day helmets tend to blow off, tests revealed. This strips the pilot of head protection and it snatches away his oxygen.

By cutting slots into the new helmet behind the forehead portion, designers were able to make the helmet stick to its job. The slots create a small vacuum which holds the helmet firmly in place. They also permit air to escape from inside the helmet. With present-day helmets, this is a problem. During bailouts at supersonic speeds, air pressure tends to build up inside the helmet. Eventually the pressure is so great that it literally blows the helmet off the pilot's head.

The new helmets recently proved successful in outdoor wind tunnel tests at simulated speeds up to Mach 1.04. This speed is slightly above the speed of sound.

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TECHNOLOGY

Newly Developed Rice Oil Helps Cooks, Industry

➤ CHEMISTS HAVE learned to extract a new oil from rice bran which is usually wasted in the milling of rice. The oil promises to be a boon to housewives and to manufacturers of cosmetics, soaps and anti-rust compounds.

Pioneered by the American Rice Growers' Cooperative Association, Houston, Texas, the new industrial extraction process yields a clear, light-colored oil having a bland flavor and odor. It resembles peanut oil in physical properties, but is more resistant to becoming rancid than other vegetable oils.

The ARGC, reporting to the Southern Association of Science and Industry in Atlanta, Ga., revealed that rice oil when used in cooking does not pick up flavors and odors of foods fried in it. Thus the housewife can fry fish, potatoes, onions, chicken and oysters in it without the problem of carry-over flavor. Foods fried in rice oil also contain less fat than when they are fried in other oils.

Further experiments have shown that the oil also is a good industrial lubricant because of its high penetration ability. A by-product of the oil is rice-bran wax which has a melting point as high as carnauba wax. Carnauba wax now goes into candles and varnish among other things.

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