

MEDICINE

Law Segregates Blood

Scientifically, no way exists to distinguish blood of one race from that of another. Yet a new state law requires segregation of blood.

► LOUISIANA state law now requires segregation of blood that will be used for transfusion. The new Louisiana law went into effect on July 30.

The citizens of Louisiana need not fear a shortage of their blood supply in case of local catastrophe, however. The blood-segregation bill has a clause to the effect that the legislation does not apply in disaster areas or in individual cases where the physician decides that an emergency exists. In these extreme cases, presumably, any blood will be acceptable.

If Louisiana continues to rely on its own commercial and hospital centers for its blood supply, compliance with the law may be possible.

The American National Red Cross recently canceled its only contract in the state. It had been supplying some of the blood for the Veterans Administration Hospital in New Orleans. The decision to cancel the contract had nothing to do with the new legislation, however. It was made before the legislation was passed and signed by Governor Earl Long.

The Veterans Administration is now studying the law to determine what effect it will have on the three VA hospitals in Louisiana. The segregation law may affect the Federal law that enforces non-discrimination and non-segregation of patients in the hospitals.

If the VA hospitals in the state have to

rely on blood donated to them from within Louisiana, as for the most part they now do, they may be subject to the segregation law.

If some of the blood is supplied to the Veterans Administration from sources other than those within Louisiana, it will be difficult to comply with the law because the blood would have to be identified at the time it is donated. This is impossible if the area of the source of supply does not label blood according to race.

Anthropologists agree there is no way of distinguishing a Negro's blood from that of a white person. No harmful effect results from transfusing blood from one race to a person of another race.

Of course, if whole blood is used, the usual precautions must be taken to use blood of the same blood group or one which is compatible. In general, doctors prefer to use a donor from the same family if possible.

Negroes have the same blood groups as whites, only the relative proportions differ. Negroes have a somewhat higher proportion of blood group B and less of the dangerous Rh negative.

If the policy of segregating blood is practiced, the chances are that there will be fewer white donors than Negro donors, due to the economic reward that encourages the Negro to donate. The greater demand will probably arise for "white" blood since white

persons can be expected to be better able to pay for blood. Thus, "white" blood may be scarce, while Negro blood piles up.

Furthermore, strict observance of the correct tagging of each pint of blood will be necessary since, once the tag is lost, identification by race will be impossible.

The blood segregation bill is the result of the efforts of Louisiana's Joint Legislative Committee on Segregation.

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ARCHAEOLOGY

Find Monument Honoring Dissolute Roman Emperor

► A MAGNIFICENT INSCRIPTION in monumental letters on a marble block over seven feet long and three feet high has been found by American archaeologists in the ancient city of Sardis in Turkey. The inscription honored the Roman Emperor Lucius Verus, dissolute brother of the virtuous and renowned Marcus Aurelius. He reigned from 161-169 A.D.

The find was made by Prof. Thomas Canfield of Cornell University in the ruins of a great building. The expedition, of which Prof. G. M. A. Hanfmann of Harvard is field director, is sponsored by Cornell University, Fogg Art Museum of Harvard, and the American Schools of Oriental Research, with the support of the Bollingen Foundation of New York City.

Science News Letter, August 9, 1958

MEDICINE

Doll House Aids Patients As Therapeutic Device

► A SIX-ROOM doll house has become a successful therapeutic device at an Albany Veterans Administration hospital in Albany.

The completely furnished doll house is being used to rehabilitate aphasic patients, those who have lost their power of expression by speech, writing or signs, or of comprehending spoken or written language, due to injury or disease of the brain centers.

One of the problems confronting the therapist who is treating the aphasic patient is how to teach the patient to recognize similarities and differences. This can be accomplished by encouraging the patient to group materials, Dr. Joshua Ehrlich and Jeanne C. Cook of Albany, report in the *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation* (July).

The doll house and its furniture provide a less cumbersome group of common materials. The patients learn to assemble furniture according to the needs of each room. As they progress, they learn to identify each piece by name.

The doll house equipment can probably be used in many other ways. Auditory training can be provided by giving commands involving any number of these small objects. Visual retention can be drilled and visual orientation and hand-eye placement can also be improved with the aid of these mobile objects.

Science News Letter, August 9, 1958



MISSILE PLATFORM—This new, long-range, eight-jet Boeing bomber will serve as a launching platform for supersonic, air-to-surface "Hound Dog" missiles. The aircraft is described as one of the U. S. Strategic Air Command's newest weapons; its increased range will allow the 450,000-pound Strato-fortress to span oceans and return to United States bases without refueling.