

GENERAL SCIENCE

President's Health Good

► **PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY** is in "superb physical condition."

He is fully capable of meeting any obligation of the presidency without need for special "medical treatment, unusual rest periods, or other limitations." These conclusions are reported in *Today's Health* magazine, Feb. 1961, published by the American Medical Association.

Some years ago, after his PT boat was sunk in World War II, President Kennedy suffered an adrenal insufficiency. Weakened by long hours of swimming, he contracted malaria which, coupled with the exhaustion, may have caused his adrenal glands to secrete an insufficient amount of the hormone adrenalin.

To insure optimal adrenal coverage, even though his last test was normal, he takes a simple oral dosage of corticosteroids. His doctors say that "adrenal insufficiency no longer presents any threat to a person who is fully rehabilitated on such simple oral therapy."

President Kennedy wears a quarter-inch lift in the heel of his left shoe because his right leg is a trifle longer than the left.

He also wears a small, corset-type brace to support the lower part of his back.

The back injury goes back to his sophomore year at Harvard University, when he apparently ruptured a disc in the lower lumbar region. When he was later thrown violently against the deck of his PT boat, he suffered a recurrence of the old football injury.

On Oct. 21, 1954, surgeons attempted a lumbar spine fusion by inserting a small metal plate, but the operation did not take. A staphylococcal infection followed, and President Kennedy was given the last rites of his church. He rallied and the metal plate was removed in a second operation in February, 1955.

He continued to suffer pain and use crutches. Final relief was obtained by novocaine injections directly into the cramped muscles. Novocaine is used on muscles in spasm to interrupt the vicious cycle of pain-spasm-pain. Spasm shuts down blood flow to the muscles; ending it restores their circulation. Thus, muscles can recover completely and function normally.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Urges Solar Energy Use

► **A BIG PUSH** for greater use of nuclear and solar energy as power sources during the next four years was urged before inauguration by President Kennedy's special advisory committee on natural resources.

Using nuclear and solar energy could speed up and reduce the cost of producing electricity, recovering minerals and converting salt water to fresh, among other projects.

To relieve the depressed mining areas in West Virginia and Pennsylvania, the committee suggests:

Burn the coal and convert it to electricity.

The top natural resources project on the list is flood control. Urgently needed improvements have been held up because of "unreasonable Bureau of the Budget restrictions," the committee report states. Local organizations already have applied for help in some 1,400 watersheds containing about 100 million acres of land. But applications are falling off because funds are not being distributed fast enough.

Budget policies inconsistent with the stated goals of the Kennedy administration should be eliminated or changed, the committee urged. Administration policy should be to try to have 2,000 watersheds completed or under construction by 1968, and should provide adequate loan funds for local organizations.

The report also urges that channels, harbors and locking facilities be improved to accommodate larger, more powerful vessels, not only for low-cost mass transportation in peacetime, but also to set up

a built-in, bounce-back system in the event of heavy nuclear attack.

In addition to water pollution control and preservation of wildlife, the report states, reforestation and the creation of additional parks are much needed improvements. These facilities might be constructed by employing young men between 16 and 21 years, the committee urged.

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Nobel Prize Winner Named Chairman of AEC

► **DR. GLENN T. SEABORG**, a Nobel Prize winner in chemistry, was named the new chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission by President Kennedy before his inauguration. Dr. Seaborg has been Chancellor for the University of California at Berkeley, where many important atomic experiments have been carried out. He replaces John A. McCone on the five-man commission.

Dr. Seaborg was co-discoverer of element 94, plutonium, which is the key to nuclear power and the main explosive in nuclear weapons. He is co-discoverer of P-239, a nuclear energy source, and of U-233, uranium, as well as other elements.

In 1951, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in chemistry for the discovery of trans-uranium elements and in 1959 he won the \$50,000 Enrico Fermi Award.

Dr. Seaborg takes over the top atomic post in the Government at a time when the

Kennedy Administration is reportedly considering a lengthy postponement of the nuclear test ban talks with the Soviet Union. They were slated to resume in Geneva Feb. 7.

The other members of the commission, appointed by former President Eisenhower, are John S. Gahan, Dr. Robert E. Wilson and Loren K. Olson.

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SEISMOLOGY

Sensitive Seismograph Records Earth Movement

► **THE ANSWER** to whether the earth's crust shrinks or stretches over a long period of time may soon be answered by a seismograph, recently installed in an underground mine in New Jersey by Columbia University scientists. The earth-movement recorder is so sensitive it can register a change of a small fraction of an inch in the earth's crust between New York and Chicago. The instrument is also expected to provide valuable information about "tides" in the solid earth, which involve the same principle as sea tides. As in sea tides, the moon plays a major part in earth tides, which sometimes rise and fall six inches in a 12-hour period. The seismograph is patterned after one designed by the late Prof. Hugo Benioff of the California Institute of Technology.

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PUBLIC HEALTH

Red Cross Supplies 40% Of Blood Needed in U. S.

► **ABOUT 40%** of the total blood supply used for the ill and injured in the United States is provided by the American National Red Cross.

In its annual report to the Secretary of Defense and the U.S. Congress the Red Cross announced that more than 2,400,000 pints of blood during the fiscal year 1959-60, an increase of about three percent over 1958-59, had been collected and distributed in its blood program.

The 55th regional blood center was added last year to serve Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The Red Cross also expanded research on blood and its derivatives at national headquarters in Washington, and has planned a branch research center at Los Angeles.

The Red Cross trained more than 2,700,000 young persons and adults in first aid, water safety and home nursing through formal class instruction and provided informal instruction to another 5,100,000 persons through press, radio and TV.

Among its other services, besides those for the Armed Forces, were 325 disaster relief operations.

Following the Chilean earthquake, which was the greatest foreign disaster of the past year, President Eisenhower asked the American Red Cross to coordinate all U.S. voluntary relief to Chile. Red Cross also sent a team of disaster specialists to assist the Chilean Red Cross and other authorities.

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