

PUBLIC HEALTH

Volunteers Safeguarded

Peace Corps volunteers to be sent to Tanganyika will have adequate health facilities for emergencies and are taught self-care, Faye Marley reports.

► THE FIRST 28 PEACE CORPS volunteers to be sent overseas to Tanganyika, East Africa, where tropical diseases are common need not be overly worried about their health.

Dr. Robert T. Scholes, a U.S. Public Health Service specialist in tropical medicine and hygiene assigned to the Peace Corps medical program, has just returned from a survey of health conditions and facilities in Tanganyika. He reported that local health programs appear adequate to take care of most emergencies.

Twenty surveyors, four civil engineers and four geologists are now being selected for the first assignment, to help build roads.

"The Peace Corps is aware of the health danger," Dr. Scholes told SCIENCE SERVICE, "and is doing everything possible to take care of the health of the volunteers."

During their 12-week preparation period the volunteers will get a full coverage of disease hazards and a good dose of self-care training, Dr. Scholes said. After reaching Tanganyika, they will get specific health orientation along with lessons in speaking Swahili.

The majority of those who go into the tropics cannot avoid intestinal disorders, Dr. Scholes said, and the volunteers must be especially careful about food contaminated with fecal-borne material. In spite of such precautions as boiling their drinking

water, they probably will get amebic dysentery or some of the bacillary forms of the disease.

The bismuth preparations in their first-aid kits will take care of simple dysentery and they can go into local hospitals for stubborn cases.

Dr. Scholes does not anticipate any real trouble with the dread disease, schistosomiasis, but snail-infested waters should be avoided. In the event that anyone is bitten by tsetse flies in the game areas, he should watch for fever that can be treated before sleeping sickness is a danger.

Volunteers will take two tablets of chloroquine each week to suppress malaria and they must always wear shoes to keep from getting hookworm. Infectious hepatitis is another danger of fecal-borne contamination. The all-male group also will be warned that venereal disease is common. Shots before they leave the U.S. will include one for typhoid and paratyphoid and other inoculations for typhus, smallpox, polio, diphtheria, plague, influenza, tuberculosis and yellow fever.

In case of serious illness that could not be cared for by district hospitals, Peace Corps volunteers could be evacuated to a modern hospital at Dar es Salaam.

Dr. Scholes said that district hospitals are small but equipped to care for emergency surgery. Standards of cleanliness are high in all the health facilities.

The Peace Corps volunteers will carry complete first aid material that can be replenished in the districts where they will be working. There are 700 grade A and grade B native dispensaries in addition to about 80 government and special hospitals and dispensaries and 25 health centers, the physician explained.

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SURGERY

Save Emotional Crippling

► IMMEDIATE PLANS for facial reconstruction by plastic surgeons can prevent cancer patients undergoing mutilating operations from becoming emotional cripples, the American Association of Plastic Surgeons meeting in New York was told.

Dr. Jacob J. Longacre of Christ Hospital, Cincinnati, Ohio, said that rebuilding the face could be started immediately or within a few months if the surgeon were confident the malignancy had been completely removed.

In 239 malignancies removed at Christ Hospital, Dr. Longacre said, the recurrence rate has been slightly more than six percent. Some patients have been followed as long as 15 years.

"These facts have given us the courage to undertake immediate reconstruction," he concluded. "As a result, the patient's social, emotional and economic well-being are not so profoundly disturbed."

To be sure that all the malignancy has been removed, the surgeon and pathologist work together even before the operation takes place. They map out the area to be cut away, or excised, and during the operation, the pathologist analyzes sections of every edge of removed tissue.

In one case, Dr. Longacre said, 46 different sections were studied before the surgeon's work was completed.

Facial reconstruction, he pointed out, involves extensive surgery and the use of tissues from other parts of the body. He described a 41-year-old farmer patient who had 18 operative procedures following cancer surgery that had removed his right cheek, right half of the nose, part of the right lip and left eyelid.

Flaps of tissue brought from the patient's

abdomen and chest were used to reconstruct the cheek and nose. This man had become an alcoholic following the mutilating surgery but since his face was reconstructed he has held a steady job and has not had a drink for seven years, Dr. Longacre said.



BURIAL FOUND AT MISSILE CENTER—A seven-room Pueblo Indian site was found at the White Sands Missile Range, N. M., by Larry Hammack, a spare-time archaeologist. The skeleton, estimated to be over 800 years old, is that of a middle-aged adult.