

## PUBLIC HEALTH

**Sanitary Privies May Help Solve Polio Problem**

► **SANITARY PIT PRIVIES** in rural areas, often objects of humor, may nevertheless help solve the problem of how to stop the spread of infantile paralysis, Roy N. Johnston, associate engineer of the Kansas State Board of Health, declared.

"There is much evidence to show that this dreadful disease may be borne by water, food or the fly," Mr. Johnston pointed out. "In Kansas I have observed that where poliomyelitis (infantile paralysis) has occurred it is usually in areas where sanitary conditions were unsatisfactory. It has been observed by the Public Health Laboratories in Kansas that in seeking blood for the preparation of convalescent serum for poliomyelitis, most of the donors lived in sub-standard environments."

He challenged sanitary engineers to find the answer to the question whether complete coverage of rural areas with sanitary privies would influence the control of infantile paralysis. He added that so far as he could determine there "is not a state epidemiologist or sanitary engineer who has carried on any worthwhile studies of this disease."

Whether sanitary privies would help solve the polio problem or not, their construction in rural and urban communities is one method of reducing the amount of intestinal disease, Mr. Johnston declared. A state program for privy construction, begun in Kansas in 1933, besides its direct effect in reducing disease stimulated tremendous community interest in other phases of health work, such as rat control, safe drinking water, screening, and proper hygienic surroundings for rural schools.

Many of the engineers who took part in the program advanced professionally to higher positions as a result of this experience.

The program in Kansas was part of a larger program sponsored by the U. S. Public Health Service under which more than 3,000,000 sanitary outdoor toilets were constructed by State health departments in cooperation with the Federal relief agencies. This Public Health Service sponsored program was really an outgrowth of the much earlier hookworm eradication campaign for which the Federal health service first advocated pit privy construction.

To work on this earlier campaign the U. S. Public Health Service sent

many young officers who have since become outstanding in public health, among them the present Surgeon General, Dr. Thomas Parran.

*Science News Letter, November 7, 1942*

## INVENTION

**Plastic Slide Fastener Improved; Uses No Metal**

► **THE FAMILIAR** metallic slide fastener, we have often been told, will soon be out for the duration. But Germany seems to have been in this condition

for some time past. A patent for a completely non-metallic or plastic slide fastener was applied for in this country July 1, 1939, by Julius Pueschner and Joseph Pueschner, of Sudetengau, (according to the Nazis) in Germany. Patent was applied for July 14, 1938, in Czechoslovakia. U. S. patent 2,297,245 was awarded to them and is assigned to the Alien Property Custodian.

Yet the inventors claim only improvements, in construction and manufacture, over previous non-metallic slide fasteners.

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THE ARMY-NAVY "E" Flag awarded to Bausch & Lomb recently for continuous achievement in production for Victory is the third in a series of "E" awards. Previous awards included the original Navy "E" and the All-Navy "E" Bargee with star.

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