

MEDICINE

Rationing Is Problem

Hospitals classed with picnic grounds and night clubs in rationing arrangements. This and labor form biggest war time problems.

► **FOOD RATIONING**, for which hospitals have been classed with night clubs and picnic grounds, and labor are about the biggest war time problems hospitals must face, it appears from the report of John H. Hayes, Superintendent of Lenox Hill Hospital and Dispensary, at the symposium on civilian hospitals in war time held by the United Hospital Fund of New York in cooperation with the Greater New York Hospital and the New York Academy of Medicine.

On supplies and rationing, Mr. Hayes said in part:

"No patient, at least in this vicinity, has thus far suffered due to lack of needed drugs or equipment. However, we are handicapped in many ways.

"Every housewife knows how difficult it is today to plan even one meal ahead. Consider the dietitian. She must plan days ahead, and different menus for different types and classes of patients and employees. This has never been easy. Today it is almost impossible; but they do it.

"Rationing is a problem to all Americans. Unfortunately hospitals were not placed in a separate group for special consideration. They were included with night clubs, picnic grounds, etc., and I assure you that no hospital is either, even though we do keep open all night.

"According to the formula, based on meals served in December, our slowest month, many hospitals will be allowed only 20% or 25% of their needs in ra-

tioned foods. This would just about take care of their fruit juice requirements.

"I am sure that something will be done to ease this situation."

Hospitals are constantly losing help of all kinds, from cooks to window washers, who are attracted to jobs in war industries and other work by the 40-hour week and high salaries, Mr. Hayes said. Training new employees takes time, and meeting increased labor costs on hospital budgets is difficult. Some hospitals are increasing the rates to patients, but, he added, "if you double the rate to a free patient it is still nothing."

Nurses' aides, girl scouts and various other volunteer groups are helping out on the nurse shortage and doctors themselves are in some places taking over intern duties, even at night, to ease the doctor shortage. On the shortage of other workers, however, Mr. Hayes declared he knew no solution. He paid tribute to the hundreds of workers who still "rightfully feel that they are where they can do the most good, that they are in war work. They are not tempted by shorter hours or temporary high pay. This is patriotism indeed, not at great hazard, as that of others might be, but real patriotism nevertheless. These same people are putting 10% or more of their pay into war bonds and are among the first to add their mite when collections are made.

"Incidentally, these are among the people worth fighting for."

Science News Letter, April 10, 1943

RESOURCES

Sunflower Supplies Oil

► **SUNFLOWER-SEED** oil, which may be obtained in large quantities from certain varieties of the common sunflower, is a possibility in the United States to help fill the shortage in edible oils due to war conditions.

Imported olive oil, which came from Spain, France, Italy and French North Africa, in pre-war days, is now available only in small quantities. Peanut oil and cottonseed oil are demanded in great volume for war purposes. Russian sun-

flower-seed oil is no longer obtainable. Argentine oils are filling only part of the need. Sunflower-seed oil produced at home would save shipping, supply the demand, and develop a new source of income for the American farmer in post-war times.

American sunflowers grow luxuriantly in much of the country. Much of the seed finds its way into commerce, but largely as bird and poultry feed. Missouri raises the largest commercial crop, even exceed-

ing Kansas where the sunflower is the state flower. California is also raising the seed for market.

Oil from sunflower seed was produced commercially in the United States a generation or so ago on a relatively small scale. The industry was discontinued because of the high labor costs when compared to labor costs in the other countries producing edible oils.

Land suitable for corn is suitable for sunflowers, Dr. G. S. Jamieson of the U. S. Department of Agriculture states. The crop can be planted and cultivated with the same implements. New mechanized methods of harvesting, threshing and processing will make it a profitable crop for oil as well as for poultry feed.

Argentina is showing us the way this can be done. It is now producing large quantities of sunflower-seed oil and shipping much of it to the United States. In 1932 it produced only about 5,000 tons. The Spanish war cut off Argentina's supply of olive oil, and it started to raise its own table oils from peanuts, cottonseed, rapeseed and sunflower seed. Now the amount made from the sunflower far exceeds that from all other sources together. It is nearly 500,000 tons a year, according to the U. S. Department of Commerce, one-fourth of which is being sent to this country.

Science News Letter, April 10, 1943

INVENTION

Growth of Seeds Promoted By Adhesive Envelopes

► **SEEDS** have assumed an importance out of all proportion to their size, as Victory Garden planting is urged even upon city dwellers, and crop prospects are debated daily in Congress. Means for making each seed more efficient, covered by patent 2,313,057, is the invention of Albert C. Fischer of Chicago.

It is a simple method for making each seed carry into the soil a small provision of fertilizer, fungicide, insecticide and (in the case of legumes) nitrogen-fixing bacteria that it needs in its first day or so after germination. This is accomplished by coating the seed with a water-soluble glue into which the initial life-needs of the seedling-to-be are impregnated.

To protect the seed against possible ill effects of too-long contact with fertilizer and fungicidal compounds, it is first covered with a coating of neutral glue, then with one or more coats containing the chemical and bacterial growth aids.

Science News Letter, April 10, 1943