

Valuable saving of manpower in highly trained troops such as parachutists was also achieved by use of penicillin in cases of gonorrhea that resisted sulfa drug treatment. Many such cases occurred in Tunisia shortly before the men were due to go into battle. With penicil-

lin, they were cured in about 48 hours. Comparison between penicillin and sulfa drugs in treatment of war wounds was not made because the investigation was limited to learning as rapidly as possible how efficient penicillin might be and how best to use it.

Science News Letter, January 15, 1944

PUBLIC HEALTH

Flu Pandemic Not Likely

Sulfa drug triumphs over the pneumonia which often follows an attack of influenza are largely responsible for avoiding a repetition of the epidemic of World War I.

➤ THOSE who have been worrying, as most persons have each fall and winter since the war started, over the possibility of a world-wide influenza epidemic as devastating as that of 1918, may be reassured by a statement by the editors of the *New England Journal of Medicine*. (Dec. 9, 1943)

"Any epidemic in the near future is likely to be much less severe than was the pandemic of 1918," they declare. "This, of course, is only speculation," they admit, "but is based on significant observations."

The observations are: 1. The influenza of the last war had a high mortality but the deaths were accounted for chiefly by complicating pneumonias in which the hemolytic streptococcus was the germ most frequently encountered. The same was true of the epidemics of measles in Army camps during the last war.

2. During the 1940-1941 epidemic of influenza, the staphylococcus played an important role in complicating pneumonias but intensive treatment with the sulfa drugs gave quite encouraging results. The results, in fact, were so good that it was suggested that in the event

of another influenza epidemic it might be well to use sulfa drugs early in severe cases. This is especially recommended for patients with severe prostration, signs of tracheobronchial and lung involvement and presence of appreciable numbers of hemolytic streptococci and staphylococci in the sputum.

3. Another encouraging omen comes from recent reports concerning measles. Outbreaks of this occurred in the Army during 1943 but, unlike the 1918 experience, deaths were rare. This is attributed to widespread use of sulfa drugs in all cases with lung involvement.

"It is not unreasonable," the medical authorities comment, "to expect a similar low fatality rate from influenza occurring under like circumstances."

For the future, there is even more reason for confidence when supplies of penicillin become large enough for large-scale use, since this chemical from mold is especially efficacious in infections with the staphylococcus. This germ is being found in increased frequency in surgical conditions and in complications of other respiratory diseases, so may be expected to play a considerably greater role in future influenza epidemics than in any previous ones.

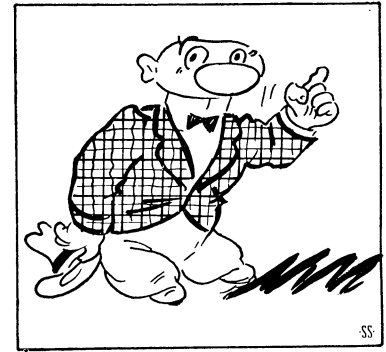
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SAFETY

Mexican Don Timorato Teaches Civilian Defense

➤ DON TIMORATO, hero of a popular comic book, has been enlisted in the service of civilian defense and is teaching Mexicans the correct thing to do in case of bombing.

The book was written by Jorge Pinó Sandoval, Mexico's most widely read columnist, and illustrated by Antonio Arias Bernal, Mexican caricaturist whose



cartoons have appeared in many American newspapers and magazines. Their idea for using the comic book to give easy, graphic lessons in civilian defense appealed to José Torres Navarrete, publicity head of the National Lottery, and that 160-year-old institution devoted to raising funds for the Department of Public Welfare and Assistance, has published the book.

Its title is *Don Timorato Y Las Bombas*, which translates literally into Mr. Scary and the Bombs. Sixty-four pages in black, red and green and a four-page cover portray the doings and misdoings of Don Timorato during a fictitious bombing of Mexico City.

When he does the wrong thing, it appears in red. In green, he is always correct. Sitting under an open window during an air raid is pictured in red. But when Don Timorato correctly lies on a mattress under a heavy table, with radio, first aid kit, food and water close at hand, the scene is pictured in green.

Much humor and wit appear in the book and Don Timorato has become a very popular character. Copies of the book are in great demand and go from hand to hand.

Science News Letter, January 15, 1944

MEDICINE

Penicillin Found to Help Relapsing Fever Cases

➤ PENICILLIN scored one hit and two misses in latest trials of its diseases fighting power. The hit is a lucky one for mankind, since it is against relapsing fever, a disease found in most countries and likely to become epidemic with the overcrowding and poverty that often follow war.

Hard on the heels of a report from the Mayo Clinic of penicillin's effectiveness against relapsing fever in mice comes a second report to the same effect from Harvard. This report, by Dr. Donald L. Augustine, Dr. David Weinmann

