

PUBLIC HEALTH

Medical Care for Veterans

The Senate subcommittee urges extension of present facilities so returning servicemen and their families will not lack adequate care.

➤ EXPANSION and development of present community health and medical facilities so that the 15,000,000 returning veterans of this war and their families will not lack adequate care is recommended by the Senate subcommittee on wartime health and education in an interim report released recently.

Members of the subcommittee are Senators Claude Pepper, Fla., chairman, James M. Tunnell, Del., Elbert D. Thomas, Utah, Robert M. LaFollette, Jr., Wis., and H. Alexander Smith, New Jersey.

Because the quality of service given by the Veterans' Administration has been criticized, the subcommittee "proposes to ascertain the facts" through a study to be made at once with the help of medical authorities, veterans' organizations and professional groups.

"The least we can do for the battle-scarred veteran is to assure him any medical care he may need," the report declares.

Even with the planned expansion of the Veterans' Administration facilities to 300,000 beds ultimately, the Administration will not be able to assure adequate medical care in its own facilities for the 13,000,000 or more veterans who will not have injuries sustained in the service and for their families.

"The problem must be dealt with as part of the larger problem of assuring adequate medical care in every community," the subcommittee states.

In the postwar period, veterans of this and previous wars plus their families will comprise one-third to one-half of our whole population, the report points out.

"Therefore the concern which we have for medical care of veterans arises not only from an obligation to protect the future welfare of our fighting men and women," the report states, "but also from the practical necessity of maintaining and improving the health of the whole people."

The report recommends that any veteran who has a service-connected disability should be assured hospitalization and out-patient treatment, not only for his service-connected disability, but also for any other disability from which he may suffer. There is no such assurance

in the present law. Responsibility for full medical care of veterans having any disabilities connected with service should be given to the Veterans' Administration, the report states, adding that such veterans will probably number from 1,500,000 to 2,500,000, depending upon how long the war lasts.

"It should be made clear," the report states, "that the subcommittee does not advocate any restriction on the responsibility which the Congress has placed on Veterans' Administration, nor on

medical services now assured to veterans. On the contrary, it believes that the responsibility of the Veterans' Administration should include full care of all having service-connected disabilities.

"It believes also that the Administration should continue to have the authority which it now possesses to admit for hospital care any veteran in need of such care, when facilities are available and when he is unable to pay for hospitalization. This provision is a necessary safeguard because of inadequate community facilities at the present time, although it can never be a satisfactory alternative to community hospital programs for all veterans."

Special emphasis is given in the report to the need for developing psychiatric services for veterans who do not require hospitalization for mental conditions.

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GEOLOGY

Abundant Gasoline Supply

➤ THE UNITED States has a potential source for an abundant supply of gasoline for its future industrial development, declares F. B. Plummer, University of Texas geologist, (*Mining and Metallurgy*, Feb.). This source includes the securing of new petroleum reserves here and abroad, and the manufacture of gasoline from coal, lignite, shale and natural gas.

As for new oil developments, Mr. Plummer mentions that the West Edmond pool in Oklahoma and the expansion of new discoveries in southern Mississippi during the past year signify that large supplies are still to be found in the United States.

"The difficulty of locating pools like the East Texas pool and West Edmond pool in Oklahoma by ordinary geological or geophysical work," he says, "suggests that more intensive subsurface engineering and geological work is necessary—a search for every major buried ridge, a detailed study of the subsurface stratigraphy, development of cheaper coring methods for locating petroliferous strata and courage to test the favorable pinched out sands at the most promising spots."

Large pools may be found by such methods in foreign countries, he states, where up to now geological and geophysical work has concentrated on the location of anticlines and domes and few attempts have been made to locate pools of the East Texas type.

"Undoubtedly, many stratigraphic traps adjacent to the larger oceanic islands, the Philippines, the Netherlands Indies, and the West Indies are filled with oil," Mr. Plummer points out. "Some of these chains of islands are simply ridges partly buried beneath overlapping sediments of the present seas. The subsurface strata contain rich source beds and probably oil pools exist along their borders."

In discussing the possibilities of developing fuel from oil shale, coal, lignite, and agricultural and forestry products, Mr. Plummer says that oil shale is known to occur in quantity in 18 states and contains some 90,000,000,000 barrels of recoverable oil. Oil is now being obtained from shale in Scotland, Germany, Russia, France, Sweden, Australia, Manchuria and Japan. In Sweden a new method has been devised for the direct extraction of oil from shale beds by electrical heating.

Successful oil production from coal and lignite is reviewed by Mr. Plummer. He refers also to the extensive search being carried on by the U. S. Bureau of Mines in the hydrogenation and liquefaction of these products in this country.

"The experiments," he says, "covered a wide range of rank of coals, including peat, brown coal, lignite, subbituminous and bituminous coal, and lead to the conclusion that hydrogenation under optimum conditions results in high liquefaction yield."

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