

MEDICINE

Doctors Are Reading—

► THE FREEDOM of medical science and medical scientists has expanded through Federal support, Rep. John E. Fogarty (D.-R. I.) declared in the Journal of the American Medical Association, 180:721, 1962.

The pros and cons of Government support for medical schools were discussed in six articles including those by physicians and university officials who reported a recent A.M.A. symposium.

"There are those who are by temperament, philosophy and association viewers-with-alarm," Rep. Fogarty said. "They point out that the freedom of science has not yet been threatened by Federal support, but it soon must be because Federal support inevitably means Federal control."

Such fears have become groundless, Rep. Fogarty said. He pointed out that the "widespread and pernicious idea that the Congress has no appreciation of the value of basic research is groundless."

The American Medical Association, Rep. Fogarty said, has been largely a passive by-stander in the development of the na-

tional medical research program, vaguely disapproving on grounds of principle.

"It is worth pondering," he said, "the implications of the fact that the most important long-range influence on the practice of medicine and the health of the American people—medical research—has been fostered and guided under policies to which the American Medical Association has contributed little."

Speaking for the AMA, Dr. Glen R. Leymaster, associate secretary, Council on Medical Education and Hospitals, said that Federal funds are generally available for assistance in construction of clinical and research facilities but not for educational facilities (p. 718).

"Since these grants require local matching funds," Dr. Leymaster said, "research construction is competing with educational construction. Most educators agree that the greatest need at present is for the rehabilitation of the existing and the building of new educational facilities."

• Science News Letter, 81:381 June 16, 1962

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Pesticide Diseases Up

► OCCUPATIONAL diseases in California caused by pesticides and agricultural chemicals nearly tripled from 1954 to 1960, despite the fact that the farm labor force decreased significantly.

The California problem is typical of the nation. Farm chemicals are affecting more agriculture workers and non-farm workers, such as shippers and handlers, a survey by the California Department of Public Health revealed in Berkeley.

In recent years, chemicals such as fertilizers, protectants and additives, have greatly increased the productivity of farms, controlling diseases and protecting stored food. Just one century ago it required four farmers to produce enough food for five persons. Today one farmer supplies 24 persons with both food and fibers.

But the same chemicals which have caused this revolution in productivity are potential hazards to humans. Improper usage and lack of safety precautions can result in disability and death.

A survey of doctors' reports of the State of California revealed 975 cases attributed to agricultural chemicals in 1960. Thirty-six percent were workers with Spanish surnames, probably not familiar with English.

The organic phosphate chemicals are among the most hazardous pesticides, the report stated. They may enter the body through the unbroken skin or be inhaled. DDT and other halogenated hydrocarbon pesticides are slightly less toxic.

Half of the cases were skin conditions. Some chemicals caused stomach and intestinal disorders, neuritis and acute anxiety. One half of those reportedly stricken

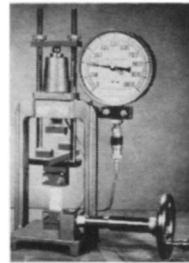
were forced to miss work for some period of time.

Workers who supply and transport agricultural chemicals are better protected than those who apply them. Crop dusters accounted for 101 of the 975 cases, farm hands an even larger proportion.

The seriousness of agriculture chemical diseases is further emphasized by the fact that more and more chemicals are being added to the list, with less knowledge about their danger being released.

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