

MEDICINE

Executive Director Named For National Cancer Council

DR. LUDVIG HEKTOEN of Chicago has been appointed executive director of the National Advisory Cancer Council, it has been announced by the U. S. Public Health Service. This Council with the Surgeon General of the U. S. Public Health Service, who is *ex officio* chairman, will direct the activities of the recently created National Cancer Institute.

Congress has appropriated \$750,000 for a building and equipment for the Institute and authorized the spending of \$700,000 annually for research and other steps toward control of cancer.

"I should think that research will be given the main emphasis in the program of the Cancer Council and Institute," Dr. Hektoen said, "because the scientists who are delving into the nature and causes of cancer are leading the procession of cancer fighters.

"A most important activity of the Institute and Council will be to promote the practical application of the results of research to the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of cancer."

Dr. Hektoen brings to his new position a wealth of experience in scientific research and in the direction of such activities. He has been director of the John McCormick Institute for Infectious Diseases, Chicago, has served three times as chairman of the medical division of the National Research Council, and is at present chairman of the National Research Council. It was under his direction at the McCormick Institute that Drs. George F. and Gladys H. Dick developed their test for scarlet fever susceptibility and the toxin for vaccinating against the disease which is now being used successfully in the struggle to conquer this childhood plague.

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PHYSIOLOGY

Natural Craving For Vitamin Has Been Discovered in Rats

A CRAVING for a vitamin, so strong that it "seems to be one of the strongest of all the cravings," has been discovered by Drs. Curt P. Richter, L. Emmett Holt, Jr., and Bruno Barelare, Jr., of the Johns Hopkins Hospital.

This particular craving exists in rats, but the scientists do not know yet whether other animal species have the same craving, they state in their report (*Science*, Oct. 15).

The particular vitamin which rats crave is B₁, sometimes called the appetite stimulating vitamin. Excessive appetite or craving for special food stuffs exist only for three other substances, so far as science now knows. These three are common salt, phosphorus and calcium, the latter two necessary to build bones. The craving for vitamin B₁ seems to be even more powerful.

Both normal rats and those deprived of the vitamin show a great appetite for dried baker's yeast, which contains the vitamin. The craving showed up even

more strongly when the animals were allowed to drink a solution of the pure vitamin in water. Once these animals, previously deprived of the vitamin, had tasted it, it was hard to stop them from drinking it.

"Efforts to remove the bottle were met with fierce resistance," the scientists report. "The bottle was held tightly with both paws and even with the teeth. By reaching far up into the bottles the rats made an effort to obtain every remaining drop of the vitamin."

Taste and odor both aroused the animals' interest. The rats found the bottles containing the vitamin solution immediately even when as many as 12 other containers filled with different foods or liquids were present in the cage at the same time.

The liking for the appetite vitamin evidently depended as much on its appeal to taste and smell as on any knowledge of its good effects on health gained by previous experience. This opens up

the question of the roles played respectively by experience and by the deeper biologic factors dependent on the taste mechanism, the scientists point out.

Existence of the craving, they suggest, should help in behavior studies by giving a new reward of powerful influence.

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PSYCHOLOGY

Propaganda Is Futile Unless Listeners Are Ready

IN this autumn when war is reaping grim harvest of maimed and dead in Europe and in Asia and when a large portion of the globe seems involved in a struggle of Fascist against Communist, Democratic forms of government being gravely endangered, attention should be turned upon the propagandist.

Powerful as are the bombing planes of the military forces, mightier still are the arts of the propagandist.

A word of cheer for those who unduly fear his terrifying influence, and another of warning for those who may allow themselves to be influenced by him, comes from the meeting of the American Psychological Association.

The agitator and his best propaganda are futile unless the population upon which he is working are already attuned to receive his message, Dr. George W. Hartmann, of Teachers College, Columbia University, told a special session of that meeting discussing the psychology of political attitudes. He reported conclusions from an actual field laboratory experiment at the polls.

"The most inspiring and convincing of pacifist publicity material distributed on the campus of West Point or Annapolis is just so much wastepaper," Dr. Hartmann said.

"Communist or fascist agents could flood America with pretty girls, gifted orators and enthusiastic demonstrations in 1937, but the effect would certainly be negligible.

"The situation is essentially the same with regard to the acceptability of certain types of leadership. The ablest and finest candidate with a splendid program is striking his head against a stone wall if he is too far ahead of his constituency. They will have none of him."

Propagandists are already subtly attempting to enlist American public opinion in a program of war; they are attempting to make us take sides in the fascist-communist argument.

Psychological experiments seem to indicate that at present in most communities the arguments would fall on deaf ears.

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