

Oregon Doctors Skeptical of 'Miracle' Drugs Used In Battle Against Tuberculosis

By PAUL W. HARVEY JR.

THE DALLES (AP) — Oregon's tuberculosis experts, who run the state's TB hospitals in Salem, Portland and The Dalles, don't know yet if the new drug, isonicotinic acid hydrazide, is the miracle cure they are looking for.

They have been using this widely publicized drug for two months, and they hope it might be a cure. The results have been encouraging.

The doctors here are skeptical about stories from eastern TB hospitals that tell about seriously ill patients being greatly improved in only a few days. But the fact that the Oregon doctors are buying all of it they can get is a sign that they think the drug might be the long-sought cure for tuberculosis.

Ten patients here have been getting the drug two months. They failed to respond to the other drugs, but now they are improved. One 20-year-old girl has increased her weight from 77 to 85 pounds in the two months by using the drug, which now is being given to 63 patients.

This beautiful hospital, high on a hill overlooking The Dalles and the Columbia River Valley, has 162 patients. There are 102 employees,

which makes it costly to operate. The state of Oregon spends \$250 a month on each TB patient. Those who can afford it pay a maximum of \$65 a month for their care.

While a state TB hospital has the job of treating patients in order to cure them, it has another equally important task that people don't think about. This latter job is to protect society from the spread of TB germs. And keeping patients confined and watching them closely after they are released is the way the spread is checked.

The state has a waiting list of 60 patients who need hospital care. Construction of the 60-bed addition to the state TB hospital in Salem will take care of them.

In addition to using many drugs, the hospital here does considerable surgery. The comparatively new operation, removal of part of a lung to eliminate badly diseased areas, is performed here, as well as collapse of lungs by injecting air into the chest, and removing ribs to push in a lung.

The hospital has an out-patient clinic, which has 1,500 visits a year. Former patients come here for lung collapse and other treatment. Collapsing a lung is simple. The doctor, using a little local

pain-killer where the needle goes in, punches the needle between the ribs and shoots in the air.

Lung collapse gives a lung rest so it can heal more quickly.

While drugs and operations are helpful, a most vital part of the treatment is rest. The patients have sunny pavilions and pleasant surroundings, an important factor in encouraging rest and keeping up morale.

Everybody rests every day from 1 to 3 p.m. During that period, a big chain is placed across the entrance to the grounds, and nobody gets in.

The three doctors on the staff here can't remember an employee ever getting the disease from a patient, which sounds unusual. They explain the reason is that the patients are trained not to cough in the presence of other persons.

Patients are released only when they can't spread the disease. In the hospital's rehabilitation program, patients are taught hobbies and, more important, new ways to earn a living.

For instance, a bulldozer operator comes to the hospital, with no chance he'll be able to run a bulldozer again. So he's given tests to see what jobs he could do, and is

taught the fundamentals of a new line of work, such as accounting.

The hospital doesn't like to release a patient unless he feels secure.

While some patients have been here seven or eight years, the average patient whose disease has been detected early can be released in only nine months.

Tuberculosis now is becoming a problem in upper age groups. There are more serious cases among men, because men have a habit of waiting longer to get treated.

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Son of Mr. and Mrs. E. LeRoy Coynor of Tulelake, Coynor is enrolled in science.

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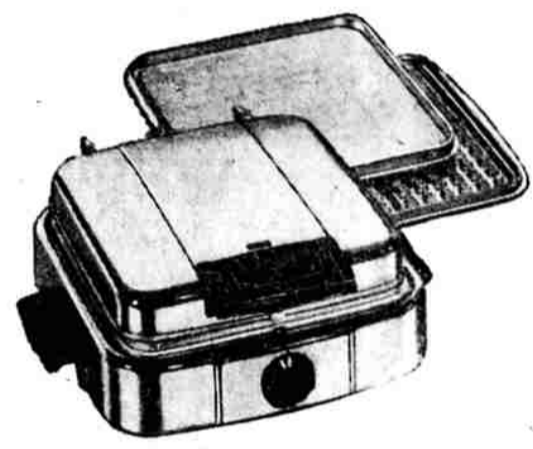
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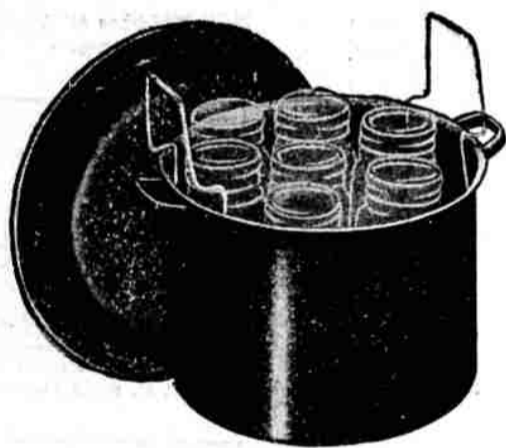
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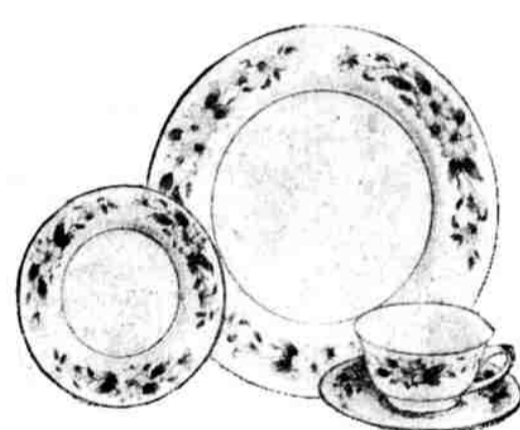
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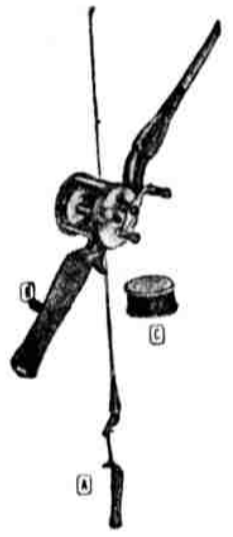
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