

Folsom, Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, said:

"I am advised that there are 53 million persons in the top priority group of children under 15 and expectant mothers. Enough vaccine has now been released to provide two injections for three-fourths of this group.

"The period of acute shortage of vaccine now appears to be over in many parts of the nation. In areas where demand still exceeds supply, we may look forward to an easing of the shortage soon if production continues at the present rate.

"I urge parents, physicians, and health officials to cooperate in making maximum use of the increasing supply of vaccine as it becomes available. We should all remember that vaccination in July may prevent polio in August or September—the months when the danger is greatest."

Altogether, states and territories have now been allotted 64,747,305 cubic centimeters; the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis has received 13,732,134 cubic centimeters; 16,281 cubic centimeters have been licensed for export; and 562,740 cubic centimeters went into commercial channels before controls were established.

### Scientists Serve High Schools

In order to determine what efforts are being made by science departments and scientists to maintain specific contact with potential science students, the AAAS Science Teaching Improvement Program (STIP) sent a questionnaire to 809 4-year colleges. A total of 733 replies have been received for a 90-percent return.

The most common method for providing contact between the high-school student and the scientist is on the college campus. Career days are sponsored by 374 colleges as one way to enable students to understand science and scientists. Engineering and/or science expositions are held by 174 colleges. Mathematics or science assemblies are convened by 102 colleges. The assembly programs may be provided by students but commonly involve senior scientists. Science fairs are sponsored by 235 colleges in cooperation with Science Clubs of America, the State Academies of Science, and/or other groups.

Less commonly the approach is of a more individual nature and usually for a longer time. Thirty-eight of the colleges hold workshops for high-school students. These may be held after the junior or the senior year of high school. Fifteen of the colleges give tests for high-school students to aid in the selection of the major field by the student and to give

both the student and his counselors some idea of his chances of success in his chosen field.

Direct contact between the scientist and the student is helpful in dispelling a common notion that scientists are "peculiar." One of the most significant findings of the survey was that scientists are active in student guidance at 423 of the colleges.—I. E. WALLEN

### Placebos versus Reserpine

Blank placebo pills had the same effect as reserpine, a tranquilizing drug, when they were used to relieve anxiety of patients before surgery, it was reported by three Northwestern University doctors, Roy M. Whitman, assistant professor of neurology and psychiatry, Morris A. Lipton, assistant professor of medicine, and Eva Kavan, former instructor in surgery.

In a "double blind" study with 30 patients, one group received the placebos and the other received reserpine, also called rauwiloid, for 6 days before surgery. About one-half of both groups showed "a significant change in anxiety," whether they received the drug or blank pill, the report said. The pills were identical in appearance, and "neither the doctor, nurse, anesthesiologist, nor patient knew which pill was the real thing."

The study was part of a search to find more satisfactory drugs for use before operations being performed in the Veterans Administration Research hospital at the Northwestern medical center. The report was made in the summer issue of the *Quarterly Bulletin* of Northwestern University Medical School.

### News Briefs

■ On the Ishibashi brothers' ranch in Torrance, Calif., plastic film spread on the ground to keep strawberries from touching the moist soil and to prevent the soil from drying out has reduced fruit losses resulting from mold rot by 75 to 85 percent. The Ishibashis felt that plastics might succeed where other types of mulches were prohibitively expensive or did not last long enough. The plastic film, which is specially perforated for this job, is made from Bakelite polyethylene, a product familiar to growers and consumers alike as a material for packaging fruits and vegetables.

■ According to a recent report in the July issue of *Medical Times* by Paul Williamson of Albuquerque, N.M., a newly developed polyethylene tape is superior to suturing in closing wounds. The advantages described are improvement in the rate of wound healing and reduction in the incidence of infection

and scarring. Application of the tape is described as painless, and the tape usually may be freely removed when healing is complete.

■ In an amendment approved 4 June to the U.S. Information and Educational Exchange Act of 1948, Congress ruled that exchange visitors in this country under provisions of the act may not apply for either an immigrant or nonimmigrant visa or for status as an alien admitted for permanent residence until 2 years have elapsed following their departure from the United States. However, the attorney general, if he finds it in the public interest, may waive this requirement on the request of an interested Government agency and the recommendation of the Secretary of State. The title of the U.S. Information and Educational Exchange Act of 1948 reads "An Act to promote the better understanding of the United States among the peoples of the world and to strengthen cooperative international relations."

■ A group of four Stanford Research Institute industrial economists headed by Raymond H. Ewell will aid India in the development of small industries as a part of India's second 5-year plan. The project is being carried out under a contract between the institute and the Indian Department of Commerce and Industry.

■ A step toward meeting the long-felt need for a properly housed National Library of Medicine [*Science* 123, 869 (18 May 1956)] was taken by the Senate on 11 June, when it passed bill S. 3430 as amended. The bill provides for the establishment of a National Library of Medicine in the U.S. Public Health Service, under the supervision of a 17-member board, and authorizes construction of a new building for the library in or near the District of Columbia. The identical bill introduced in the House, H.R. 11524, has been approved by the Subcommittee on Health and Science of the House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee and has been sent to the full committee for further action.

■ A new large-diameter deep-sea corer has been developed by Maurice Ewing, professor of geology at Columbia University and director of the Lamont Geological Observatory at Palisades, N.Y. The new instrument has a diameter of 11.5 inches and will penetrate about a foot of the ocean floor. The large sample thus obtained can be subjected to more precise analysis than the cores obtained by the smaller instruments previously available. The corer has been tested in the Hudson River and in 13,000 feet of water off the Canary Islands and is at present being used in the Mediterranean. The