

IN THE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

\$3,000,000 to Be Expended for Veterans' Hospitals

THE board of managers of the National Homes for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers has set October 1 as the date upon which it will call for bids for the construction of new hospitals at the soldiers' homes at Milwaukee, Wis., Dayton, Ohio, and Leavenworth, Kan., and at the Marion National Sanatorium, Marion, Ind., for the care of tuberculosis and neuro-psychiatric veterans of the world war. The proposed expansion of these institutions, which was recently approved by the Secretary of the Treasury upon the recommendation of the consultants on hospitalization, will provide accommodations for 1,000 additional patients and will cost approximately \$3,000,000.

It was stated that the hospital construction work will be along the most modern lines for the treatment of tuberculosis and neuro-psychiatric disease, based upon plans recommended by the National Tuberculosis Association. When the work is completed, it will represent the last word in hospital construction. The plants will consist of large connected buildings with administrative, medical and complete service departments for the care of bed and semi-ambulant patients.

The ambulant patients will be housed in special pavilions, with every attention to fresh air consideration in treatment of tuberculosis. Broad and spacious porches will be constructed on all buildings and so arranged that beds can be drawn out from the sleeping rooms and placed upon the sleeping porches except in extremely bad weather. In the large buildings it has been planned to reduce the number of patients in the individual wards. No rooms for more than three beds will be constructed and many single rooms for patients will be provided.

Trapping in Alaska.

UNDER new regulations promulgated by the Secretary of Agriculture on August 30, for the protection of all land fur-bearing animals in Alaska, an open season is provided for trapping beavers and martens in the Territory. This announcement will be read with interest by trappers in Alaska and by fur dealers in the United States, since there has been no open season for killing beavers there since 1910, and none for martens since 1916. Prior to the time when close seasons were established on these valuable fur-bearers the animals were being rapidly exterminated. In many localities in the interior of Alaska beavers had disappeared entirely and martens were rapidly diminishing in numbers. It was to conserve them and permit them to increase that the close season was provided.

Because of the varying climatic and physiographic features of different parts of Alaska, and in order to conserve our fur resources with justice to all, the Territory is divided into three trapping districts, in each of which the conditions relating to fur are comparatively uniform. District No. 1 includes the Aleutian Islands, the Alaska Peninsula and neighboring islands, and Southeastern Alaska, mainland and islands, from Yakutat Bay to Dixon entrance, and in this area beavers may now be trapped from December 1 to March 31 and martens from November 16 to March 31. District No. 2 includes the mainland and islands north of the areas of District No. 1, as far as the headwaters of the streams flowing into the Arctic Ocean north of latitude 68 degrees. District No. 3 includes the region drained by the streams entering the Arctic Ocean north of District No. 2. In both these districts the open season for killing beavers and martens begins November 16 and ends March 31.

The Bureau of Biological Survey, Department of Agriculture, which administers the law protecting land fur-bearing animals in Alaska, has been conducting investigations for the past year with a view of again permitting the killing of beavers and martens where practicable. These investigations have shown that while in some few districts beavers and martens are still scarce, in many others they have increased to the extent that no harm will result in allowing them to be killed during at least one season. After one season's trapping, it is found that these valuable fur-bearers can not maintain proper numbers, the matter of again providing a close season the year round will be considered.

Public Shooting Grounds.

OF the more than 6,000,000 hunters of the United States, many will be benefited by the recent action of authorities in Louisiana in setting aside the Pass-a-l'Outre public shooting grounds, a tract of 60,000 acres at the mouth of the Mississippi River. Here the sportsman of moderate means can enjoy all the opportunities for wild fowl shooting enjoyed by wealthy members of the exclusive clubs in that region. The action taken is in direct accord with recommendations made by the Biological Survey, United States Department of Agriculture. Louisiana

is one of the first States to adopt the broad policy of protecting its citizens against monopolization of the desirable hunting grounds by exclusive clubs.

In the Pass-a-l'Outre reservation there is one lagoon which it is proposed to set aside as a sanctuary where all wild fowl will find refuge from the gun of the hunter. The shooting grounds are dotted with duck ponds and make one of the finest duck-hunting preserves in the United States. It is located on practically newly created ground, built up in the last few years by the Mississippi with the sediment constantly carried down and deposited where the river pours into the Gulf of Mexico. Were it for sale the property could hardly be bought for much short of half a million dollars.

The season for hunting wild fowl on the new shooting grounds will extend from November 1 to January 31 and the law permits each hunter to shoot twenty-five ducks each day. To prevent overcrowding, hunters will be required to register, and accommodations will be provided for an average of 100 hunters, more than it is probable will be there on any one day.

"An extension of such public-spirited and progressive conservation measures by other States," said Dr. E. W. Nelson, chief of the Biological Survey, in commenting on the action of Louisiana, "will result in the retention of water areas in various parts of the country where our migratory wild fowl may have feeding grounds and places to breed, and where the public can continue to exercise the splendid health-giving sport of wild-fowl hunting during the open season."

New Navy Accounts System.

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY DENBY secured the permission of Comptroller General J. R. McCarl last week for the bureau of supplies and accounts of the Navy Department to conduct an administrative examination of a limited number of navy fiscal officers' accounts.

It is believed that in the long run the procedure authorized will prove to be one of the best things done by the Secretary of the Navy and by Comptroller General McCarl in the movement toward promoting economy and efficiency in the navy. The procedure authorized will allow the officials of the Navy Department to correct errors in accounts submitted by fiscal officers of the navy before such accounts are forwarded to the general accounting office for final audit. No duplication of activity is involved—on the contrary the general accounting office will be relieved of the necessity of discovering errors susceptible of correction by the Navy Department; hence the general accounting office will be free to devote its attention to matters of law and other matters not coming within the purview of the naval authorities.

Some of the specific advantages toward increasing the efficiency of the government methods will be that the bureau of supplies and accounts of the navy will be able to determine within sixty days after the receipt of accounts in that bureau whether or not appropriations used afloat have been correctly charged with the corresponding expenditures. If an officer or enlisted man of the navy personnel has been undercredited he will be promptly apprised by the naval authorities—this will mean a great increase in the contentment of navy personnel. The fiscal officers themselves will be financially protected and made to feel more secure in their fiduciary capacity by being informed within sixty days as to whether or not their accounts are correct.

On the whole, while the accounts coming within the purview of the Comptroller General's authorization are at present very limited in number, the navy feels that a distinct gain to its efficiency and to the efficiency of the nation has been inaugurated.

Coal Recovery Process.

Preliminary float-and-sink and table-washing tests have been recently made in the Bureau of Mines laboratory on samples of washery refuse from the Wilkeson Coal and Coke Company. Results indicate a possible recovery of 15 per cent to 20 per cent of coal containing 11 per cent to 12 per cent ash. A full-size commercial table is being installed in the washery by the company for further tests on the refuse. If the large-scale tests are as encouraging as the laboratory tests, the company intends to build a table-washing plant of at least five tables for the re-treatment of all of its accumulated refuse, which are conservatively estimated to contain 1,000,000 tons of material. Froth flotation tests were made on the middling products from the table tests. Results of these tests indicate a further recovery of 5 per cent, containing 11 per cent ash up to 15 per cent recovery containing 18 per cent ash. Further flotation tests will also be made on products from the large-scale table tests.

THAT dusts of various types are intensely harmful to mankind, occasioning in some industries terrible explosions that produce great loss of life and property, and in other trades standing responsible for a highly increased death rate from lung diseases, is emphasized by investigations conducted recently by the United States Bureau of Mines. The fact that coal dust has tremendous explosive powers, once scoffed at by the veteran miner, is now demonstrated frequently by the bureau in its own coal mine at Experiment, Pa., near Pittsburgh.

Pulverized coal blown to the furnace through compressed air lines is an ideal fuel in certain industries, but the bureau points out that clouds of coal dust released from such pipes are as dangerous as a body of unconfined natural gas when liberated in close proximity to open flames or red hot metal. A number of severe explosions have occurred in industrial plants using powdered coal as fuel and it is necessary that care be used in the installation and operation of such plants.

Aluminum dust has also been found to be quite explosive and several disastrous explosions of this dust have occurred in manufacturing establishments. The dusts of various grains have been found by the Department of Agriculture to be responsible for a number of severe explosions in flour mills and grain elevators. Hard rubber dust is also declared to be explosive.

The dust of rock containing free silica, found in some metal mines in the West, settling in the lungs of the miners, is responsible for a heavy annual death rate from miners' consumption. The Bureau of Mines found in an investigation of conditions in the Butte, Mont., copper mining district that the tubercular death rate of Butte miners was nearly thirteen times as great as that of residents of the State of Michigan. Pulmonary disease due to rock dust among the miners of the Joplin, Mo., lead and zinc district affects probably as high as 30 per cent of the miners employed in certain classes of mines. Remedial measures are being found by the introduction of better ventilation and through the use of water in drilling and in the ore piles to prevent formation of a dust cloud in the air.

The Bureau of Mines in an investigation of conditions among approximately ninety plants engaged in the production of granite at Barre, Vt., found that the artisans and laborers were to some extent subject to a peculiar pulmonary disease known as stone cutters' consumption or granite pneumoconiosis, caused by inhalation of particles of granite dust no more than 1-25000 part of an inch in diameter.

Not all dusts are the enemies of mankind, however. The bureau is encouraging the use in coal mines of barriers of certain rock dusts which when jarred by the explosion of coal dust scatter and act as a screen for the stoppage of the exploding coal dust. The dust waste from slate quarries amounting to about 90 per cent of the entire material mined has been found by the bureau to be peculiarly adapted to use as a filler in the making of asphalt road surfaces.

Sells Railway Notes.

The Director General of Railroads last week announced that he had, with the approval of the President, confirmed the sale, at par plus accrued interest, of \$7,500,000 par value of railroad equipment trust certificates now held by the government. The purchasers are Messrs. Kuhn, Loeb and Company, bankers, of New York.

The equipment trust certificates bear interest at 6 per cent per annum, and mature serially from 1928 to 1935, inclusive. The securities sold are of the following railroad companies:

Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company, \$1,500,000; Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad Company, \$1,500,000; Norfolk and Western Railroad Company, \$1,500,000; Central Railroad Company of New Jersey, \$1,500,000; Southern Pacific Company, \$1,500,000.

Colors Stones With Radium.

INVESTIGATIONS being conducted at the rare and precious minerals experiment station of the United States Bureau of Mines at Reno, Nev., promise the development of a process for giving to naturally colorless gems the special tinting demanded by the jewelry trade and the fancier of precious stones. The method employed is the exposure of the stone to the emanations of radium. After several weeks' exposure to the emanations, yellow Cape diamonds have been converted to a beautiful light grass-green shade. Colorless Colorado topazes have been given a rich yellow tinting. The successful conclusion of the experiments should give impetus to the development of deposits of colorless gem material found in various portions of the West.