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Habitability of Spacecraft Is Said Major Problem

Dr. Coons Is Speaker at Hospitals Convention

The former chief medical operations officer at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Manned Spacecraft Center said here Thursday that habitability of spacecraft is a major problem.

Dr. D. Owen Coons said in an interview after a speech to the Federation of American Hospitals Convention at the Roosevelt Hotel this is particularly so with the longer orbiting laboratory flights just ahead.

"There must be something done so that conditions are more than just on a survival basis," said Dr. Coons. "The light conditions, relating to eating, sleeping, and ablutions, are not comfortable at this time."

He noted during a luncheon speech that fecal bags aboard the spacecraft are stored where the food once was. "There aren't too many extra compartments aboard the spacecraft," explained Dr. Coons.

RIGID PHYSICALS

"When the space program goes into the longer flights, there is going to be a need for recreational facilities, something like an officers' quarters in a submarine where the crewmen can get away for a little relaxation."

Resigned from the NASA program for about a year after a dispute with officials on the route of certain aspects of the medical program, Dr. Coons has continued in the aeromedicine profession in a unique manner.

"I am specializing in giving rigid physicals to pilots," said Dr. Coons. "Most pilots receive only cursory examinations to continue to be able to retain their pilot's license, but I spend three to four hours with them."

Federal Aviation Authority regulations require captains of airliners to have these physical examinations every six months,

the first officer, flight engineers and Class II pilots once a year.

Dr. Coons said there are only about three airlines which have their own medical departments, while some of the major airlines and most of the smaller airlines have none at all.

LARGE FIELD

"There are 50,000 Class I pilots," said Dr. Coons, "so you can see it is a large field." He said that a doctor giving a thorough physical examination could give no more than 1,000 to 1,500 examinations a year.

A labor lawyer, Joseph Jenkins, Dallas, Tex., told the convention that the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has determined that it has jurisdiction in cases involving investor-owned community hospitals, and that what President Nixon does in naming a nominee for the NLRB "will determine vitally what happens to you in the hospital industry."

Jenkins said President Nixon hasn't gotten around to naming a nominee for an NLRB vacancy, probably because of the difficulty he has had with recent nominations for the U. S. Supreme Court. But he said labor counsels are anxiously awaiting the President's nomination.

Jenkins urged the hospital management audience to practice a little preventive law, so to speak, by knowing what their supervisors could do in the event of a union organizing drive in their facilities.

"I would strongly suggest that if your supervisor meets with a labor organizer that he have a little notebook in which he puts down the time, date and substance of the conversation because it might be at a future date he will be testifying in an NLRB hearing and this will aid him in his testimony," said Jenkins.

REVISED STANDARDS

He also suggested that the hospital management have attorneys with them in bargaining sessions with union negotiators.

"Don't try to be your own doctor," cautioned Jenkins. "You are up against people who make their livelihood at negotiations."

Dr. Russell H. Blood, deputy assistant director, Hospital Accreditation Program, Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals, Chicago, Ill., told the convention that the revised hospital standards will be ready for a vote of the commission by April and it is hoped they can be implemented soon.

Dr. Blood said the commission has evolved 12 principles that will serve as the basis for accrediting hospitals. This has come after 30 months of intensive work, he said.

"We will have a greater in-depth study of the hospital," said Dr. Blood. "There will be no more one-day surveys. The accreditation will be for two years rather than three years."

The surveys, he said, will be done in teams. "You may have a nurse and doctor team, a doctor administrator team, or in the case of large hospitals, a nurse, doctor and administrator," explained Dr. Blood.

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Intelstat Conference Opens Here

United Press International

An international conference convened here yesterday in an effort to work out definitive arrangements for the establishment of a single global commercial communications satellite system.

The conference was opened by U. Alexis Johnson, under secretary of state for political affairs, who welcomed about 100 delegations to the meeting. The meeting, termed the Intelsat conference, is a fol-

lowup conference to a meeting held here last year from Feb. 24 to March 21.

West German representative, Ambassador Henrich Northe, replied to Johnson's remarks by saying that "we have made some progress but in the essential points we have not found common ground."

A key issue in dispute is the management of a single satellite system and how control will be apportioned to the system's members.