

Thaler Stands by Charges

State Senator Seymour Thaler stood by his charges today of guinea pig experiments in the city's hospitals despite a brickbat aimed at him by an association of city hospital staff physicians.

Accusing Thaler of "smear and scare tactics" spokesmen for the 1,500 member Committee of Internes and Residents yesterday branded Thaler's accusations as "malicious, irresponsible and untrue."

In a speech in the Senate in Albany on Tuesday the Queens Democrat denounced a hepatitis research program conducted on retarded children at Willowbrook State Hospital on Staten Island, and detailed other experiments including the unnecessary removal of malformed arms and legs of children at Harlem Hospital to demonstrate amputation techniques.

CHECKED RECORDS

"I feel that the senator should have made the proper investigation before making such statements," Dr. James B. Parris, chief surgical resident at Harlem Hospital said.

Dr. Parris said he had checked surgery records for the past two years at Harlem Hospital and found that not one amputation on a child with deformed limbs had been performed in that time.

18 Thaler Charges Bias 1967 In Hospital Staffing

By BARBARA YUNCKER

A new change of racial bias was introduced into the city hospital controversy today by Sen. Thaler (D-Queens) who has previously charged gross financial waste and mistreatment of charity patients in experiments.

His target was the Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons which supplies senior medical personnel at Harlem Hospital under a city contract. Harlem is a city-owned institution.

"I think Columbia is despicable," said Thaler, "because it practices segregated medical education. They keep their lily-white staff of interns and resident doctors at Presbyterian Hospital and let Harlem Hospital get along with Negro and foreign-trained doctors. Why doesn't Columbia rotate its house staff through Harlem?"

Answer by Columbia

Columbia's immediate answer was that two separate entities within the university are involved. The Medical Center's interns and residents are recruited by Presbyterian Hospital. The affiliation contract is with the medical college. So, according to the university spokesman, "it would take a new contract to make a true merger with Harlem Hospital possible."

Thaler's new charge came as resident doctors in the city hospitals were branding his earlier charges of grisly experiments on city patients as "irresponsible and inaccurate."

Dr. Henry F. Ryan, president of the Committee of Internes and Residents, and a senior resident at Bellevue, called the Senator's accusations, made in Albany Tuesday, a "horrendous disserv-

ice to the citizens."

He and Dr. James B. Parris, senior surgical resident at Harlem, specifically contradicted charges by Thaler that surgery was being done at Harlem for teaching demonstrations and that liver biopsies are done at Bellevue on derelicts for research only, with a death rate of four or five per thousand patients.

'Done for Diagnosis'

The tests of liver tissue, said Ryan, "are part of the normal diagnostic workup. Any research is a byproduct. In its 200 years I don't believe Bellevue has done 1,000 liver biopsies for research. They are done for diagnosis."

Thaler retorted to these and other specific refutations by the doctors by saying that he "would not quarrel with the fine house doctors—God bless 'em—it would be much worse without them. But how much would they know about research projects?"

He said he would document his sensational guinea pig charges "one a day."

Today's subject was the injection of hepatitis virus at Willowbrook State Hospital which was defended yesterday by state mental hygiene officials as sound research into possible immunity which had had the effect of lessening the liver infection within the school for retarded children. Thaler's answer, in part, was:

"They gave 1,153 children virus either orally or through intra-muscular injection. A number of these children developed jaundice; 63 of them got second attacks of hepatitis . . . There is no cure for hepatitis.

"How can you explain taking mentally ill children of 3 to 9 years and giving them jaundice to see if you can find a cure? I don't buy the statement that 1,153 parents agreed that their kids could be injected with hepatitis virus. I just don't believe it."

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