

Foundation Head Lays Polio Chaos to Politics

By JACK LOTTO

NEW YORK, May 25.—(INS)—The head of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis charged today that politics are responsible for the confusion surrounding distribution of the Salk anti-polio vaccine.

President Basil O'Connor told a New York meeting that his organization, which sponsored and supported research, has been having "difficulty" in getting information on the status of the vaccine.

O'Connor, principal speaker at the 1954 Albert Lasker Medical Journalism Awards luncheon, threw away his prepared text to lash out at the situation he said existed since the announcement on April 12 that the Salk vaccine was more than 80 per cent effective.

SAYS VACCINE SAFE.

Discussing the confusion surrounding the distribution of the vaccine, the polio foundation president declared:

"So long as the Salk vaccine and its research was in the hands of the National Foundation you had some intelligence, total courage, intellectual integrity and no politics whatsoever. During that time, until June 12, you were kept constantly informed.

"Since April 12, we have had some difficulty in being informed ourselves."

O'Connor said that despite "the babbling tongues" there is no question about the safety of the vaccine.

After his talk, newsmen asked him to explain what way politics were involved with his criticism.

HITS POLITICS.

"National and State politics are involved," he said, "there are political considerations."

He was then asked:

"Are you satisfied with the situation with regard to the Salk polio vaccine since April 12?"

"Are you satisfied? Is anybody satisfied?" he responded.

The foundation president told

newsmen that his organization which spent millions of dollars to develop the vaccine was shut out from information by the Federal Public Health Service. The service recently temporarily blocked distribution while it checked manufacturer safety checks. O'Connor said:

"We haven't been informed on discussions between the manufacturers and the national institute of health of the Public Health Service. You would think that an organization that sponsored and supported the program should be fully informed."

In his speech before 200 scientific writers, medical researchers and health organization leaders, O'Connor stated:

"When you solve a problem in research it becomes subject to politics, supply and demand and the economic factors of competition."

NOT AS DIFFICULT.

He said that despite the lack of co-operation and the confusing atmosphere the situation is not as difficult as it seems. He appealed for a calm appraisal of the value of the vaccine, declaring:

"If the facts are properly, calmly, intelligently considered the conclusion (on the vaccine's safety) will be the same conclusion reached on April 12.

"Nothing said affects the safety of the Salk vaccine."

O'Connor said he thought it was proper for the Government to keep the Foundation informed because the first \$9,000,000 worth of orders to be filled by six manufacturers was supposed to go to his organization for distribution around the country.

He said he was hopeful a solution will soon be reached to dispel the lack of information and confusion surrounding the program. He declared:

"Nothing is insoluble."