

# Americans Are Weak, N.Y. Doctor Tells AMA

By EDWIN DIAMOND

ATLANTIC CITY (N. J.), June 8.—(INS)—The Nation's love for labor saving devices is turning Americans into physical and mental wrecks, a New York doctor said today.

Dr. Hans Kraus told the American Medical Association that thousands of Americans from toddlers to octogenarians are suffering from the effects of too much inactivity resulting from our highly mechanized life.

## SEDENTARY AILMENTS.

He listed dozens of ailments he said occur among sedentary people with greater frequency than among the physically active. He included:

Coronary heart disease, diabetes, duodenal ulcers, backaches and stiff joints, emotional instability and teeth cavities.

Doctor Kraus called these hypokinetic diseases (ailments caused by lack of movement). To combat them, he urged, doctors to "substitute exercise for rest" in medical prescriptions to patients.

To buttress his argument that America was going soft, he reported on comparative muscular studies of 4,269 American youths and 2,870 children from "less mechanized European countries" — Switzerland, Austria and Italy.

He told the AMA's one hundred and fourth annual meeting in Atlantic City:

"Our children are considerably weaker (almost twenty times), much less flexible (almost five times), than comparative groups of foreign children.

"We feel that this difference

is entirely due to lack of sufficient physical activity. The children abroad use their bodies, not only to do chores, to walk back and forth to school, to walk stairs, etc., but must use them also as their only means of play and entertainment.

"Our children are not only freed from walking to and from school and from almost any chore requiring major physical exercise but their entertainment is largely passive."

## EFFECTS LISTED.

Dr. Kraus built his case for more activity by listing these two "general effects of under-exercise":

1—It directly lowers physical activities below a standard compatible with healthy life.

2—It may well contribute to organic disease by storing emotional tension and producing the diseases associated with stress.

As a start towards a "healthier" America, Dr. Kraus urged that:

Mothers stop "overprotecting their children" and get them out of play-pens and buggies.

Young women spend more time in athletics—to prepare for difficulties of pregnancy and labor.

Those who complain of an "aching back" take a series of simple muscular tests.

Physical education be expanded for the young since "provision of exercise at later stages may not be sufficient to relieve damage that has reached a chronic organic condition."