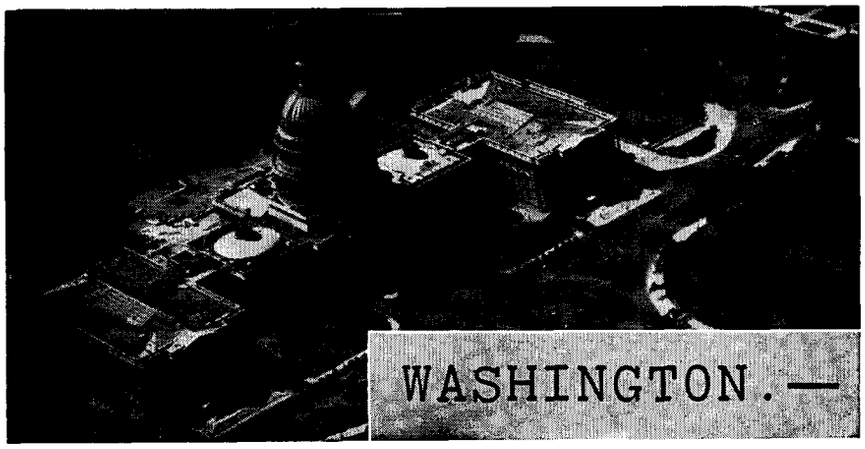


Larrick, career employee, heads FDA as Crawford retires . . . Big case load and limited budjet are major problems

WE WILL HAVE to continue to follow our policy of protecting the health if not the pocketbook in operations of the Food and Drug Administration, the new FDA Commissioner George P. Larrick told AG AND FOOD.

Larrick, a 30-year veteran in FDA service, and for the past two years deputy commissioner, has succeeded Charles W. Crawford. Crawford, also a career man, retired on July 31. Larrick's appointment stills earlier rumors that the new commissioner might be a political appointee.

FDA faces two major problems, Larrick says: increasing work load brought about by rapid technological advances and a steadily decreasing budget.

Budget Reduced Steadily

During the past four years, FDA has faced the problem of decreasing appropriations. In fiscal year 1952, for example, the agency was granted $5.64 million. In 1953 the budget was cut to $5.6 million. In the following year a substantial cut was made reducing funds to $5.2 million. For the current year which ends next June 30, the figure is $5.1 million.

The reduced budget has forced a personnel reduction of 11% since 1952. The staff, which includes scientists, administrators, inspectors, and clerical workers, totals 815. Inspectors total under 200.

Budget and staff cuts have forced FDA to be selective in its program, says Larrick. FDA's main responsibilities lie in maintaining purity, standard potency, and truthful labeling of essential commodities covered by the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act which FDA enforces.

In general, FDA's policy is to center its activities on protection of public health and to devote less attention to protecting the consumers' pocketbooks.

To handle the work in the first category alone is too big a job for the present staff. The number of new products and materials to be tested is constantly increasing. It has become difficult to make follow-up investigations of the safety of new drugs after they are placed on the market. Shortages of legal and medical manpower have delayed handling of serious fraud cases.

Seizure of contaminated and spoiled foods, misbranded drugs and phony medical devices, plus prosecution of druggists who sell prescription drugs without physicians's prescriptions get high priority in FDA's activities. In 1953, for example, FDA seized an average of 111 tons of filthy or putrid foods per week.

Manpower shortages have forced FDA to limit its checking of packaged foods for weight and composition claims. In some extreme cases, the agency has acted. Larrick points out that it would take 12.5 years for 200 inspectors to inspect each of the 96,000 food and drug company plants and warehouses. Last year 8650 were inspected.

Were it not for high standards and self-regulation of the great portion of American industry, the present FDA staff would be unable to carry out its responsibilities, Larrick says. American business is so large, however, that even the few dishonest, careless, and ignorant who violate the law, are too many for FDA's present staff.

Career Men at FDA Helm

Larrick, age 52, a native of Springfield, Ohio, attended Wittenberg College, Ohio State University, and George Washington University where he specialized in chemistry and biology.

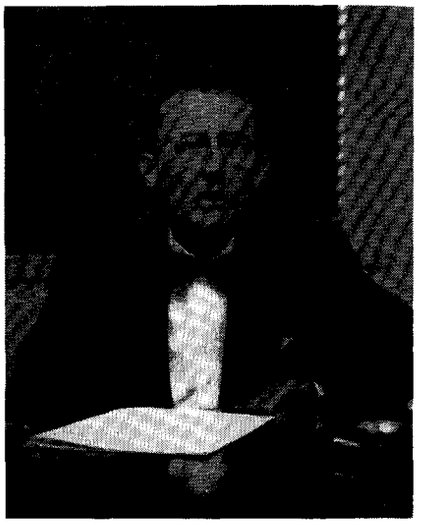
He started his career with FDA in 1923 as a field inspector. Seven years later he was made a senior inspector. Here he directed the production of inspectors' manuals and inspectors' training courses.

Prior to and during World War II (1939–45) he was chief inspector for the whole country. After the war, he continued his steady rise and became deputy commissioner in 1951.

Crawford, age 66, the retiring commissioner, has been a career government employee for 37 years. He holds B.S. and M.S. degrees in chemistry from Oklahoma A&M. Crawford began his government career as a chemist in the field offices of the Bureau of Chemistry of the FDA (then under the Department of Agriculture). In 1928 he became head of a new division handling enforcement activities. In 1942 he became assistant commissioner and two years later deputy commissioner. He became commissioner in 1951.

For many years, Crawford has devoted much time to drafting food and drug regulations and standards. He worked closely with Congress in drafting the present Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, which was enacted in 1938.

George P. Larrick



Charles W. Crawford