

## STICKINESS OF CLAY USEFUL IN WARFARE AGAINST INSECTS

The stickiness of clay has long been known and commented upon -generally unfavorably. It has remained for a young scientist to turn it to account in the war between the human race and insects. L. L. English, of Iowa State College at Ames, has found a very fine, colloidal clay, to be an efficient aid in making emulsions of various kinds of oils for use in spraying apparatus. One of the oils used was aute engine lubricating oil. A member of the audience commented that a combination of clay and lubricating oil should certainly be enough to makey any self-respecting insect want to curl up and die.

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ASTRONOMER WANTS NEW CHECK-UP ON EINSTEIN

Further test of the theory of relativity will take place if the suggestion of Dr. Ludwik Silberstein to the American Section of the Astronomical Union is adopted.

According to Dr. Silberstein, the theory of relativity rests upon three experimental proofs. One of these, an apparent displacement of stars seen at the time of a total eclipse of the sun, has been verified to the satisfaction of all. Another is a slight shift in the dark lines seen in the spectrum obtained by passing sunlight through prisms, and, while the claims of various scientists to have found it are generally accepted, the quantities involved are so minute that it is hardly a satisfactory proof.

The third test involves a peculiarity in the motion of the planet Mercury around the sun, which does not approach closest to the sun at the same part of its orbit. The perihelion, the point at which it is nearest, advances from year to year, according to the theory of gravitation as propoundedly by Newton, but there has long been known a discrepancy of about 40 seconds of arc per year. According to Einstein there should be a difference of 43 seconds. As authorities differ on the actual amount of the difference, Prof. Silberstein pointed out that a number of observations of the planet are already recorded, and that if someone could be engaged to go over these a new and accurate value of the change in the perihelion could be obtained, and the truth of the Einstein theory could be further verified or disproven.

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DECEMBER 31 ONLY TWELVE HOURS LONG TO ASTRONOMERS

Among astronomers, sea captains, and almanac compilers, December 31, 1924 was only twelve hours long. Heretofore astronomical calculations and sea days have been reckoned from noon according to the Julian day, which begins at noon, rather than according to the civil day beginning at midnight. Beginning Jan. 1, all time will be reckoned from midnight, losing half a day on Dec. 31.

This change of time will make little difference in the calculations and will standardize time. The custom among astronomers and naval men of reckoning time from noon was simply the remains of the old Julian calendar which first divided the years into regular parts. At that time day began at noon. The word Julian is not to be dropped from the calculations as the days will be called Julian civil days. Jan. 1 was Julian Civil Day 2,424,152.