



Science News-Letter

The Weekly Summary of Current Science

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BIOLOGY

Evolution Fights Loom

With the legislative bodies of forty States opening their sessions before the middle of January, educators are expecting a fusillade of anti-evolution bills similar to those already on the books of Tennessee and Mississippi, and are considering means for the defense of their liberty to teach. At the meeting of the American Association of University Professors in Philadelphia, it was stated that legislation opposed to science will be introduced in at least seventeen legislatures, though it is not expected that the bills will get far in the majority of them.

The first storm is expected in Arkansas, where a bill modeled after the Tennessee statute was prepared several months before the opening of the legislative session. Biologists admit that this State is quite likely to join the list of those where evolutionary teaching is under the ban of prohibitory law. Other States in the South where anti-evolutionary measures may be offered are Alabama, Missouri and the Carolinas; and, in the North, small but influential reactionary groups in Minnesota and the Dakotas constantly threaten action. Whether Indiana will be the scene of a fight is expected to hinge largely on the remaining strength of the Ku Klux Klan there, which is wholly a matter of guesswork. The same holds true in the northern Pacific Coast States, until recently regarded as among the chief citadels of the Klan. California, with its swarm of odd small sects and isms, will almost certainly see a "monkey bill," and will almost certainly kill it in committee. Kentucky and Louisiana killed their bills last year, and their legislatures do not meet again until 1928.

The American Association of University Professors is preparing to take a hand in the struggle. At their recent meeting the following resolution was passed:

"Resolved: That the American Association of University Professors

MATHEMATICS



DR. GEORGE D. BIRKHOFF, professor of mathematics at Harvard University, whose paper, "A Mathematical Critique of Some Physical Theories," given at the Philadelphia meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, was judged by a committee of non-mathematicians to be the most important of the meeting, and was awarded the \$1,000 prize.

Science News-Letter, January 15, 1927

take the initiative in bringing about a more effective cooperation between groups of organizations interested in opposing legislative restriction on freedom of teaching in State supported institutions and in defending the separation of church and state in educational matters."

Science News-Letter, January 15, 1927

METEOROLOGY

New Wind Record Set

A new record for wind velocity recorded by weather bureau instruments was hung up in the Miami hurricane on September 18, 1926, according to Benjamin C. Kadel, in charge of instruments at the Weather Bureau in Washington. At 7:40 a. m. on the day of the storm the wind blew with a speed of 132 miles an hour.

Science News-Letter, January 15, 1927

CHEMISTRY

New Chemical for Boilers

Diphenyl oxide, a white chemical with a powerful reek like geranium scent raised to the nth degree, is the newest stunt in the efforts of engineers to get double work out of every shovelful of coal that goes into the firebox. The trick consists simply of using the chemical in one boiler to run one engine, and then using the exhaust vapor from that engine, still very hot, to raise steam from ordinary water in a second boiler, according to Dr. H. H. Dow, manufacturing chemist of Midland, Mich. Dr. Dow has been experimenting with one of these bi-fluid boiler systems for some months, and states that it has proven itself quite successful and very economical of fuel.

The idea of getting double use from the original firing of fuel was tried first with mercury as the liquid in the first, or high-temperature boiler. From certain points of view this metallic liquid is almost ideal, but its great weight and considerable initial expense, together with constant losses, interposed engineering and economic difficulties. Furthermore, any leakage of mercury vapor is almost certain to be injurious to the workmen in the plant, because mercury is exceedingly poisonous. For these reasons, therefore, Dr. Dow sought for another liquid that would be light, cheap, and non-poisonous, and still have high capacity for carrying heat over into the second boiler to generate steam for the second engine.

A number of organic chemical compounds were found to possess these qualities, but at the temperatures used in boilers they tended to break apart into other compounds useless for power purposes and to clog the boilers with carbonaceous materials of no use for carrying heat. Diphenyl oxide, however, has been used and recondensed and used over again many times at a pressure of 200 pounds per square inch, and a temperature of 800 degree Fahrenheit, with but little de-

(Just turn the page)

INDEX TO THIS ISSUE

Alcohol, The Chemist and	37	Diphenyl Oxide	33	Man in America	43	Stealing Learned at Home	39
Anniversaries of Science	47	Dow, H. H.	33	Mayer, Joseph	39	Sun Laziest Now	43
Arson a Profession	39	Electricity Fathers Worms	47	McAdoo, William	39	Tax Laws Impossible	39
Baenbrook, Frank G.	36	Evolution Fights Loom	33	Miami Hurricane	33	Telephony, Radio	43
Bacon, Francis	47	Fairchild, Fred R.	39	MacDill, Marjorie	35	Thone, Frank	41
Bates, C. G.	41	Fenton, F. A.	41	Mendeleeff	47	Transocean Radiophone	43
Birkhoff, George D.	33	Fur Coats	35	Methanol	37	Tree Efficiencies Measured	41
Brooks, C. E. P.	45	Forest Research	45	Meyers, Charles S.	45	Turner, H. H.	45
Calves	36	Foshag, W. F.	43	Monaco, Prince of	47	University Professors, American Association	33
Cattell, Ware	47	Fox, Silver	35	Moore, Thomas V.	39	Whales, Evolution of	47
Center of North America	47	Glueck, Sheldon	40	Morrill, A. W.	37	Wind Record Set	33
Chemical for Boilers	33	Hart, Hastings H.	39	Muskrats	36		
Clapp, Earle H.	45	Hepbrun, James M.	39	Nature Ramblings	41		
Climate Through the Ages	45	Hookworm	47	Neiswander, C. R.	41		
Clothes Moth	41	Howe, H. E.	37	Nereis	47		
Cockroach	41	Hrdlicka, Ales	43	Noffsinger, John S.	45		
Corn Borer's Appetite	41	Huber, L. I.	41	Opal Weighs Pound	43		
Correspondence Schools	45	Industrial Psychology	45	Ostwald, Wolfgang	45		
Cotton Boll Weevil	41	Insanity Problem	40	Pistols Plentiful	39		
Cotton Pest Coming	37	Kadel, Benjamin C.	33	Poison Alcohol	37		
Crim Situation Reviewed	39	Kellogg, Remington	47	Practical Colloid Chemistry	45		
Devil's Lake	47	Length of Day	43	Raccons	36		
		Light, Our Dependence on	45	Roebling Collection	43		
		Lillie, Frank R.	37	Roeser, J.	41		

New Boiler Chemical

(Continued from Page 33)

terioration. It weighs but little more than water, as contrasted with mercury, which is heavier than lead. Its price is only 30 cents a pound in quantity lots, which according to Dr. Dow makes its cost, volume for volume, less than two per cent. that of mercury. The compound has been produced hitherto in comparatively limited quantities, because its only use has been in the perfume industry, but Dr. Dow states that there is no limit on the bulk that can be manufactured if it is desired for power plant uses.

Science News-Letter, January 15, 1927

It is now believed that our universe is wafer-shaped and travels edgewise through space with all its stars and solar systems.

The cry of "unclean" mentioned in the Bible probably refers to syphilis rather than to leprosy, says one writer on the subject.

Prices of mother-of-pearl shells in the Society Islands have dropped so low that diving has been restricted to raise the price.

The highest point to which a British airplane would climb recently with a wooden propeller was 16,000 feet; with metal, 18,300.

To increase parking space in Dallas, some sidewalks have been cut back to six foot width, leaving triangular peninsulas at block corners.

All molecules of matter are in constant rapid motion, except at absolute zero which is 491 degrees Fahrenheit below the freezing point of water.

A recent inquiry revealed only six famous men who slept only four hours a night: Dumas, Dvorak, Cuvier, Bismarck, Linnaeus, and von Humboldt.

News-Letter Features

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CLASS STUDY HELPS

Articles on following pages will be found especially useful in science class work.

General Science	33, 35, 43, 47
Biology	33, 35, 37, 41, 47
Chemistry	33, 37
Hygiene	37, 41, 47
Physics	33, 43, 45
Science News-Letter, Jan. 15, 1927	