

"The high percentage of group O among the Rwala is wholly unexpected and most striking," stated Dr. Shanklin. "The decrease in O in some of the tribal camps is in direct proportion to the amount of admixture with the Negro slaves in those particular camps."

Scientists divide mankind into seven different blood types, one of which is the Pacific-American, characterized by a high percentage of group O frequency. Most scientists assume that the human race was originally all of group O, the frequency factors known as A and B,

found in other types, having arisen separately through later changes.

The American Indians are very high in group O, above 90 per cent. in many pure tribes, and it is generally conceded that they migrated across Bering Strait from an original center of prehistoric civilization thought to have been somewhere in central Asia.

"A similar explanation may also apply to the Rwala Arabs," says Dr. Shanklin, "who traveled a much shorter distance."

Science News Letter, March 5, 1938

EXPLORATION

Drift Toward North Pole Is Proposed Expedition

Capt. "Bob" Bartlett, Noted Arctic Explorer, Suggests Party of Young Men on Floe or in Icebreaker

CAPT. Robert A. (Bob) Bartlett, hardy Newfoundlander who is this continent's foremost veteran of the Arctic, has sounded a call for "three or four young fellows" or an icebreaker and crew to carry out a drift expedition from the Alaska coast toward the North Pole similar to the feat just completed by four Soviet Russian scientists.

Warmly praising the achievement of the Russians in making detailed scientific observations through a nine-month vigil on an ice floe that drifted from the North Pole toward the Greenland coast, Capt. Bartlett told Science Service that such an expedition would serve to complete knowledge of the other half of the Arctic basin.

"I'd be glad to do it," he declared, "but some people consider me too old. It's a good chance for some young fellows."

The Arctic veteran, who accompanied the late Admiral Robert E. Peary as far north as 87 degrees 48 minutes north latitude on Peary's historic dash on foot to the North Pole in 1909, called such an expedition as he proposes the natural complement to the work of the Russians.

Either a small group of men could drift on an ice floe or the proper type of wooden ship, imprisoned in the ice and clear of the Siberian coast where ice pressure might destroy it, could carry out the work.

"It would be necessary to start from the Alaskan coast in the fall of the

year," he explained. Ice conditions for the type of boat necessary are best at that time of the year, while starting from Alaska is necessitated by the need for avoiding the Siberian coast.

Such a party would drift northward in the direction of the Pole, on the same general line as the Russians drifted, south from the Pole approximately along the tenth meridian west—both drifts being across the icy "roof of the world."

Fridtjof Nansen, famous Norwegian explorer, made a roughly similar trip in the *Fram* from 1893 to 1896, drifting from the Bering Sea to a point near Spitzbergen, while caught fast in the ice. But, Capt. Bartlett believes, such a journey today would produce valuable results because of the many major scientific advances since that time and the improved instruments men on such an expedition would have at their command.

Interested particularly in the shape of the ocean floor, Capt. Bartlett pointed out that such a group would have as an aid the sonic depth finder with which it might investigate the contour of the ocean bottom and the depth of the Polar seas.

The four Russian scientists, whose work he praised in warm terms, have made important contributions in knowledge of oceanology, magnetology and general Arctic science. They have made actual fact much that was only theory before, he concluded.

Science News Letter, March 5, 1938

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CHEMISTRY

Fireproofing of Fabrics Can Be Done in Home

A CURTAIN blown into a gas flame, an overheated iron on an ironing board or a rug too near an open fireplace—puff! and a fire starts. Half of the \$350,000,000 U. S. annual fire toll is to private homes and property, and fabrics too close to flames are blamed for much of it.

Something can be done about it. Fireproofing cloth and other material is simpler than doing the family wash. The type of fireproofing most easily applied in the home is made from borax, boric acid and hot water, all ingredients easily obtained. The formula recommended by the U. S. Department of Agriculture is 7 ounces of borax and 3 ounces of boric acid powder dissolved in 2 quarts of hot water.

Articles to be treated are dipped in the warm solution, wrung out by hand or through a clothes wringer, and hung out to dry on the family wash line. Draperies, carpets and other bulky articles can be sprayed with the solution with an ordinary garden sprayer.

The boric acid-borax mixture not only fireproofs but it is a check against deterioration of curtains and other fabrics exposed to the invisible sulphuric acid gas poured into the air by the burning of coal and other sulphur-containing fuels.

Fireproofing does not prevent fire from scorching or charring a fabric but it does prevent it from bursting into flame and spreading the fire. The fireproofing chemicals melt and seal off the fibers of the treated fabric. The melting chemicals also act like a miniature automatic sprinkler system in that they give off moisture that combats the flames.

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Bees prefer nectar that is rich in sugar, a scientist has observed.