



RECENT VISITOR

This iron fragment from the Canyon Diablo meteorite, which crashed to earth in geologically recent time, and was probably seen to fall by Indians, is about 100,000,000 years old, according to evidence given by the radium, helium and lead it contains.

ments, such as sandstone or shale. The iron meteorites resemble the earth's interior as it has been described by geophysicists, whose instruments tell them facts about places they will never see.

Comets, when they cool and compact into large masses from clouds of luminous dust, are the source of meteorites, according to another theory. Some geologists believe that meteorites do not come from the solar system at all, but that they are wanderers from outer space, attracted into the solar system by the sun's pull, and only incidentally pulled to earth. The new age figures do not solve the riddle of the meteorites, but only show that they are of widely differing ages.

Science News Letter, April 2, 1938

PUBLIC HEALTH

Urges Useful Employment As Mental Health Measure

USEFUL employment—with emphasis on the useful—for all who are able and willing to work was urged as a public health measure by Surgeon General Thomas Parran of the U. S. Public Health Service.

Speaking "as a doctor" before a Senate committee to investigate unemployment and relief, Dr. Parran said:

"Whatever the cost, I would urge that from the standpoint of public health, in its larger concept—of mental health—economic factors are subordinate to the vital necessity of providing for our destitute citizens an opportunity of a livelihood earned by individual effort.

"We cannot for long years and perhaps generations repair losses to human character and mental health which will result from a failure to give useful employment to our citizens."

The vicious circle of poverty-disease-poverty can best be broken, Dr. Parran said, "by doing what we know how to do to improve the health of the underprivileged groups."

He cited figures from the recent Public Health Service survey showing that there is much more illness among the unemployed and much less medical care than among those in more comfortable economic circumstances, and that disease is a large factor in unemployment and unemployability.

Unemployment and economic worry were among the factors causing mental illness and breakdown in as high as one-fourth of first admissions to mental disease hospitals during depression years,

according to hospital superintendents' estimates.

Illness and death due to tuberculosis, syphilis, pneumonia and cancer could be greatly reduced, Dr. Parran said, by applying present knowledge to all classes of the population.

Death rates from tuberculosis among the unemployed are now as high as they were for the entire population in 1900. The reduction in the general tuberculosis death rate during the years since 1900 hides the high death rate among lower economic groups.

Science News Letter, April 2, 1938

PUBLIC HEALTH

Peak of Measles Epidemic Not Due For Three Weeks

THE MEASLES epidemic slacked off a bit during the week ending March 19, figures just received at the U. S. Public Health Service show. For this last week the total number of cases, exclusive of Iowa which has not yet reported, was 43,489. This is about 300 cases less than the previous week.

Health authorities do not think the peak of the epidemic has been reached yet, however. Charts of measles reports for the past 9 years show that the totals go up to a high point, then drop slightly for a week and then rise again to the final peak. Only exception to this in 9 years was in 1935 when the peak was reached on March 30. Other peaks usually come about the middle or end of April, after which the epidemic dies out.

That peak week of March 30, 1935, saw the largest number of cases ever reported for a single week, over 35,000.

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In the Science Service series of radio discussions led by Watson Davis, Director, over the Columbia Broadcasting System.