

plussions ejected a part of the floor from the crater in the form of volcanic bombs and ash. These two conditions differ greatly in character.

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## Fly Is Leprosy Carrier

**T**HE COMMON house fly was indicted by a French scientist of the Pasteur Institute in Paris as a carrier of leprosy.

It is the only insect that carries the micro-organism causing the dread disease, Dr. E. Marchoux declared before the meeting.

However, conditions must be favorable for the disease generally before even the fly can transmit it, Dr. Marchoux said. Matters of environment, lack of cleanliness, climate and other factors enter into the picture.

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## Pacific Raised Five Feet

**T**RANSPACIFIC aviation, using coral atolls like Midway Island as "stepping stones" on the long over-water hops, would probably not yet be possible if the land had not been raised some five feet in recent times, Dr. Harold T. Stearns of the U. S. Geological Survey, told the meeting.

There is a "five-foot bench" in the Pacific Dr. Stearns said. "So many coral atolls, as for example Midway Island, stand about five feet above sea level that there can be little doubt that an emergence of approximately five feet has occurred in recent time," he said. By "recent," geologists mean the epoch of time following the last Ice Age some 20,000 years ago.

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## Pressure Linked to Quakes

**I**N CERTAIN regions earthquakes nearly always occur after a fall of atmospheric pressure, and in others after a rise in pressure, the fall being most common over the sea and the rise over the land.

This is indicated by a report by Dr. R. C. Hayes, acting director of the Dominion Observatory, Wellington, New Zealand.

He investigated the effects of atmospheric changes on the occurrence of 200 prominent earthquakes in the New Zealand region over the period of 1931 to 1936, noting the pressure change during an interval from one to two days before the occurrence of the earthquake. The results, plotted on a map, indicated that

sea earthquakes were preceded by a fall of pressure and land earthquakes by a rise.

"As a fall of pressure indicates a removal of load," he said, "and a rise an

increase of load, it is considered that the results give some indication of the general crustal movements at present taking place in the regions concerned."

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### PUBLIC HEALTH

# Precedent-Making Decision Needed in A.M.A. Case

## Decision of Federal District Justice Proctor Does Not Necessarily Foreshadow Similar Opinions

**F**EDERAL District Justice James M. Proctor's decision throwing out the indictment of the American Medical Association on charges of violating the Sherman anti-trust law does not necessarily foreshadow similar opinions in higher courts which would end the government court custom pointed out.

U. S. District courts almost without exception, one attorney said, do not hand down precedent-making decisions such as a sustainer of the indictment would be. The indictment broadens the legal term "trade" to include the practice of medicine as well as ordinary business.

Justice Proctor threw out the indictment of the A.M.A. for its attacks on Group Health Association, government employees' medical cooperative, on the ground that the Sherman act, as interpreted by the courts in the past, does not count medical practice as a trade. It is a learned profession and the law, he implies, does not say anything about restraint of learned professions. This is his opinion despite the fact that doctors in suing each other under common law have alleged "restraint of trade."

New departures in law, such as finding that the practice of medicine has become a "trade" in the last few years within the meaning of the Sherman law, are customarily left up to the U. S. Circuit Courts of Appeals and the Supreme Court.

"The government attorneys should have expected the decision," it was said. "Perhaps they did. It is many years since a District judge did anything but follow the custom."

The ever more liberal Supreme Court, which has shown a willingness to rewrite old legal terms in view of changed conditions today, may well be willing also to sustain the indictment.

Another possible avenue of attack for the Department of Justice in its determination to stop interference with coop-

erative medical groups, as foreseen in legal circles, involves stopping government payments to District hospitals which discriminate against the Group Health Association. Several still do.

Hospitals are paid out of District funds for charity cases they accept. In some instances, this is a substantial part of the hospital's income.

"Such payments of taxpayers' money to hospitals which discriminate against some of the taxpayers by refusing to accept G. H. A. patients may be illegal." This approach is seen in addition to the possibility, suggested by Attorney General Murphy, of summoning another Grand Jury and re-indicting the A.M.A. and its co-defendants.

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### ZOOLOGY

## Museum Immortalizes Turtle's Record Egg Laying

**F**ROM expeditions that bring back for our museums strange and interesting things: A record turtle egg-laying performance of Mamma loggerhead on Sanibel Island off the Florida coast, 55 minutes for the entire nesting performance, leaving water, digging nest, laying eggs, covering with sand. It is soon to be immortalized by a habitat exhibit at Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History.

Two new and rare birds from Sumatra were gathered by George Vanderbilt's expedition for Philadelphia's Academy of Natural Sciences. One was a brown finch whose nearest relatives perished 32 years ago in a volcanic eruption; another was a thrush that a European might mistake for a blackbird.

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About one adult in 150 in this country is in a mental hospital.