

GEOGRAPHY

Aleutians Have Long Days

Night obscures these important islands for only five hours out of each 24, but there is a great deal of rainfall and fog.

► THE LONG daily hours of daylight and twilight which come during the summer months in the northland now illuminate the Aleutian Islands, for nearly 19 hours out of each 24. The hours of daylight will constantly increase up until about the end of June. This means longer days for daylight bombing of the Japanese bases on Kiska.

Dutch Harbor is at about the same latitude as Edmonton, Canada, 300 miles north of the United States-Canadian line and the Glacier National Park in Montana. It has a far different climate, however, because the warm Pacific current sweeps the Aleutians and causes more uniform and higher temperatures, together with much rainfall and fog.

The Aleutians stretch westerly 1,200 miles from the end of the Alaska Peninsula nearly to Siberia. Attu, the western American island, is less than 800 miles from the southern tip of the Kamchatka Peninsula. This in turn is only about 800 miles from the north coast of Hokkaido, the north island of Japan proper, and about 1,400 miles from Tokyo.

The Aleutian Islands have been described as a string of barren, rocky, treeless islands, stretching like stepping stones from Asia to North America. The ancestors of the American Indians and Eskimos probably followed these stepping stones in their hazardous migrations from Eastern Asia to Alaska, and then to the south and east. It would seem that the Japanese thought they

could use the same stepping stones to reach the American continent. But now they will be used in reverse.

The importance of the Aleutians to the American armed forces is strategic. First they must be cleared of the enemy. Then they can be used for bases between America and Asia. They are close to or on the shortest routes across the Pacific.

The great circle route from San Francisco to Tokyo, 5,225 miles, passes south of the Aleutians. The 5,000 mile great circle route from Seattle to Tokyo almost touches the islands. The air route from Fairbanks, Alaska, passes over them. From Seattle to Dutch Harbor is 2,200 miles, and from there to Attu about 850 miles. Safe harbors and airfields along the Aleutians are of the utmost importance to the Allied Nations at war with Japan when the all-out attack on the Japanese homeland begins. They are important also in delivering aircraft cargoes of food and war equipment to Russia.

The Aleutian Islands can not be used for food production except for fish. They lack the necessary soil. Most of them are uninhabited. They can be used the year around for military bases. They seldom have below zero temperature. But they are always chilly, damp and foggy. The fogs constitute the greatest difficulty in making full use of them.

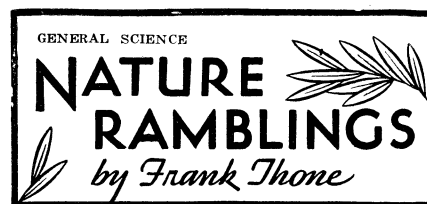
Science News Letter, May 29, 1943

MEDICINE

Polio Foundation Makes Three-Year Grant

► THE National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis has made a three-year grant totalling \$120,000 to the University of Michigan School of Public Health for continuation of a long range program of study of infantile paralysis and other virus diseases ranging from influenza and atypical pneumonia to chicken pox and mumps. The grant was announced in a joint statement by Basil O'Connor, president of the Foundation, and Dr. Alexander G. Ruthven, president of the University.

Science News Letter, May 29, 1943



Jungle Campcraft

► FLIERS forced to bail out or make crash landings in jungle or desert will have many of their worries taken away by a neat, stoutly bound little book placed in the emergency kit of all aviators flying in the tropics by the Army Air Forces, which tells how to make life possible, and even reasonably comfortable, under wilderness conditions. It might have been called *Every Man a Crusoe*, but it is more prosaically titled *Jungle and Desert Emergencies*.

Ingenious instructions, compactly presented, tell how to turn a parachute into a tent, its pack into a knapsack, any piece of suitable fabric into a lining for a miniature cistern to catch rainwater. Or the parachute can also be turned into an effective fish net.

Don't be afraid of wild animals, the fliers are told: they're at least as much afraid of you as you are of them. Much more to be feared than serpents or leopards are the much smaller flying and creeping things—mosquitoes, ticks, mites, botflies, leeches. All of them bring dis-

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