

racial problems.

The speaker warned against further unscientific efforts: "Continued failure to take full advantage of the potential contribution of the social sciences in developing and testing the necessary techniques is inexcusable in view of the urgency of the problem of developing more rational race relations and the tremendous expenditure of time and money in efforts directed towards its solution."

## Research in America

➤ AMERICAN medicine remained "colonial" long after the Colonies had become a nation, Prof. Richard Harrison Shryock of the University of Pennsylvania stated before the meeting. That is, medical men depended on Europe for a proper finish to their training, and especially for fundamental research.

Prof. Shryock thinks this was partly due to a Victorian revulsion to "cutting dead people open" in autopsies, partly to "the indifference of a commercially-minded people to any science that did not possess immediate utility."

However, once late nineteenth-century researches demonstrated that the "pure science" of earlier decades was proving of practical value, younger American medical men turned to research with great enthusiasm. At the same time, there was a lot of quickly-made money waiting to be used, and some of this got used in support of research. Research was long delayed in this country, but when it got started it developed with a rush.

## Americans Good Observers

➤ BY FAR the greatest part of the outstanding astronomical observations have been made in America, while many of the major theoretical advances have come from overseas, Dr. Henry Norris Russell of Princeton University told the meeting. But astronomers of many nations have cooperated so closely in expanding our knowledge of the universe that their contributions are hard to untangle, he said.

The temperature and composition of the sun and stars, the sources of their energy, the dimensions and rotation of the galaxy and the vast realm of external galaxies have been disclosed by looking through the great refractors and special instruments such as a tower telescope and interpreting these observations in the light of theoretical advances.

*Science News Letter, October 26, 1946*

## MEDICINE

### Organization to Help Victims of Nerve Disease

➤ THE VICTIMS of a baffling and crippling nerve disease, their relatives, friends and doctors have banded together in an attempt to find weapons for conquering the malady, multiple sclerosis.

With Dr. Tracy Putman of the Neurological Institute of New York as honorary chairman, the new organization, called the Association for Advancement of Research in Multiple Sclerosis, has its headquarters at the Academy of Medicine Building in New York.

The disease is believed to be more than twice as common as infantile paralysis, but no one knows the exact number of victims.

Double vision, involuntary quivering, difficulty in walking and balancing, speech difficulty, numbness of parts of the body and emotional upsets are among the symptoms which result from a patchy destruction of the nervous system. What causes the nerve destruction is not known though there are numerous theories.

The disease most often strikes young people between the ages of 20 and 40, frequently incapacitating them for life. No cure is yet known for it.

*Science News Letter, October 26, 1946*

### Research Leads to New Link Between Cancer, Diet

➤ NEW EVIDENCE for a link between cancer and diet is reported by W. D. Salmon and D. H. Copeland of the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station.

A diet that does not contain enough choline results, within eight to 16 months, in cancers occurring in a high percentage of laboratory rats, they find. The abnormal growths, both cancerous and precancerous, occurred principally in the lungs and liver.

In the experiment, dietary cancer in the livers of the animals was always found to follow cirrhosis of the liver. Cancer of the liver in people likewise follows cirrhosis in a high percentage of cases, the nutritionists point out in their report to the American Journal of Pathology.

Malignant tumors occurred in the livers of 30% of the rats receiving the low-choline diet. Primary cancers were found in the lungs of 38% of the animals. In 10% of the cases, malignant tumors de-

veloped under the skin or were imbedded in the muscular tissue. None of the control animals receiving the same diet as the others but with adequate amounts of choline developed cancer.

Choline is a relatively simple organic base, sometimes classed as a vitamin.

Of the many attempts to link cancer to diet, the work of the two Alabama nutritionists is believed to be the first in which cancer has been produced in experimental animals as a result of a specific dietary deficiency.

*Science News Letter, October 26, 1946*

While the population of India during the past 40 years has increased by about 100,000,000, the total area of land under cultivation has remained the same.

## SCIENCE NEWS LETTER

Vol. 50 OCTOBER 26, 1946 No. 17

The weekly summary of Current Science, published every Saturday by SCIENCE SERVICE, Inc., 1719 N St., N. W., Washington 6, D. C. North 2255. Edited by WATSON DAVIS.

Subscriptions—\$5.00 a year; two years, \$8.00; 15 cents a copy. Back numbers more than six months old, if still available, 25 cents.

Copyright, 1946, by Science Service, Inc. Reproduction of any portion of SCIENCE NEWS LETTER is strictly prohibited. Newspapers, magazines and other publications are invited to avail themselves of the numerous syndicate services issued by Science Service.

Entered as second class matter at the post office at Washington, D. C., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Established in mimeographed form March 18, 1922. Title registered as trademark, U. S. and Canadian Patent Offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, Abridged Guide, and the Engineering Index.

The New York Museum of Science and Industry has elected SCIENCE NEWS LETTER as its official publication to be received by its members.

Member Audit Bureau of Circulation. Advertising Representatives: Howland and Howland, Inc., 393 7th Ave., N.Y.C., Pennsylvania 6-5566, and 360 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, STate 4439.

### SCIENCE SERVICE

The Institution for the Popularization of Science organized 1921 as a non-profit corporation.

**Board of Trustees**—Nominated by the American Association for the Advancement of Science: Edwin G. Conklin, American Philosophical Society; Otis W. Caldwell, Boyce Thompson Institute for Plant Research; Willard L. Valentine, Editor of Science. Nominated by the National Academy of Sciences: Harlow Shapley, Harvard College Observatory; Warren H. Lewis, Wistar Institute; R. A. Millikan, California Institute of Technology. Nominated by the National Research Council: Hugh S. Taylor, Princeton University; Ross G. Harrison, Yale University; Alexander Wetmore, Secretary, Smithsonian Institution. Nominated by the Journalistic Profession: A. H. Kirchhofer, Buffalo Evening News; Neil H. Swanson, Executive Editor, Sun Papers; O. W. Riegel, Washington and Lee School of Journalism. Nominated by the E. W. Scripps Estate: Max B. Cook, Scripps Howard Newspapers; H. L. Smithton, Executive Agent of E. W. Scripps Trust; Frank R. Ford, Evansville Press.

**Officers**—President: Harlow Shapley. Vice President and Chairman of Executive Committee: Alexander Wetmore. Treasurer: Frank R. Ford. Secretary: Watson Davis.

**Staff**—Director: Watson Davis. Writers: Frank Thone, Jane Stafford, Marjorie Van de Water, A. C. Monahan, Martha G. Morrow, Ronald Ross. Science Clubs of America: Joseph H. Kraus, Margaret E. Patterson, Henry Platt. Photography: Fremont Davis. Sales and Advertising: Hallie Jenkins. Production: Dorothy Reynolds.