

pore station broadcasts daily to ships at sea, informing them of health conditions in various ports, so they know each day which ones can be entered safely and without financial loss due to quarantine delays.

Better protection against cholera is another immediate benefit coming from WHO's interim commission. The Egyptian experience showed that anti-cholera vaccines from various parts of the world varied greatly in potency. An international standard is now being set up through WHO.

## MEDICINE

## Starve Malaria Germs

**Malaria germs cannot grow and reproduce without methionine. Conquest of malaria would help stop starvation throughout the world.**

► **DRUGS** to stop malaria by starving the germs may come as a result of research by Drs. Ralph W. McKee and Quentin M. Geiman of Harvard Medical School in Boston.

The germ-starvation treatment, if it can be developed to a practical point, will help stop starvation and undernutrition in humans the world over, even in regions where there is no malaria. Much more food could be grown on a world basis if there were not so many hundreds of millions of malaria-weakened people in agricultural regions of the world.

The possibility of the germ-starvation conquest of malaria comes from the discovery that malaria germs cannot grow and reproduce without methionine. This

Streptomycin, and other new disease remedies from molds and germs, will also get international standardization through WHO. Patriotic Americans may feel a little unhappy if our scientists can have no part in standardizing the life-saving drug that we gave the world.

These are some of the more selfish reasons for our joining WHO. Americans who have always been ready to help unfortunate people anywhere know for themselves the unselfish reasons for joining an organization devoted to promoting world health.

*Science News Letter, April 10, 1948*

chemical is one of the protein building blocks, needed by man as well as malaria parasites. The malaria germs get the chemical from the blood plasma surrounding the red blood cells in which the germs live.

Growth of the germs in the test tube can be stopped by chemicals that are enough like methionine to fool the germs but which can not be used by them for growth and reproduction. Or other chemicals which react with methionine to stop it as a protein builder might be used.

Trial of such compounds in monkeys with malaria and search for other chemicals required by the germs is continuing.

*Science News Letter, April 10, 1948*

## GEOLOGY

## Earth's Crust Redated

► **ROCKS** and meteorites may be only about half the age that scientists have estimated in the past, thanks to the discovery that cosmic rays continuously generate within them helium gas that has been used as a geological calendar.

This means that a meteorite that was supposed to have fallen 100,000,000 years ago probably is only half that age.

This redating of the earth's crust arises from the research in South Africa by Prof. H. E. Huntley of the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

In photographic plates exposed on a

11,000-foot mountain peak to capture cosmic rays bombarding the earth from outer space, Prof. Huntley found that in the glass base of the plates the radiation disintegrates the glass atoms and produces helium at a considerable rate, at least 100,000 atoms per cubic centimeter each year.

Helium found generally in rocks has been attributed to radioactive minerals found throughout the earth's crust which also produce helium. This allowed scientists to set up a time-scale based on helium content.

If both the radioactive material in the rocks and the cosmic rays produce helium at about the same rate, then the ages assigned to rocks may have to be cut about in half. But the usual rocks are still many millions of years old.

*Science News Letter, April 10, 1948*

## AERONAUTICS

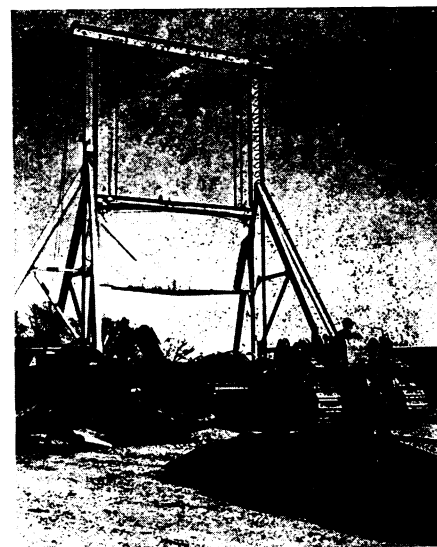
## Giant Guillotine Chops Obsolete Airplanes

► A **GIANT** guillotine with a three-ton blade is busy daily at the Naval Air Station in Norfolk, Va., chopping obsolete and wrecked airplanes into sections so that the metals may be salvaged.

When the great knife is dropped 26 feet from the top of its standard, its force is enough to make a clean cut through the fuselage, wing or tail sections of a discarded plane, resulting in pieces small enough to put in melting pots for reduction to ingots. The blade of the guillotine is raised by electric power; it falls by gravity. The machine can handle 16 planes per day.

The salvage materials obtained from planes consist of heavy steel, light iron, aluminum, condemned tires, instruments and miscellaneous items. Reusable accessories are kept for future applications. All scrap batteries or other material containing lead are stockpiled for future military use.

*Science News Letter, April 10, 1948*



**GUILLOTINE OF PLANES—**Wrecked airplanes are chopped into scrap by this giant guillotine. The three-ton blade is raised by electric power, dropped by gravity.