

proper combustion.

To get the drone into the air and give it sufficient speed to permit the engine to operate, another plane is used. At proper speed and altitude, the KDM-1 is fired and released. From that point on, the target is on its own except for the radio-controls, operated at will from the earth below.

Upon exhaustion of its fuel, the KDM-1 noses up sharply, a parachute is released and the target drops gently into the water over which it has been flying. Experience shows that any damage that may occur is only slight, and the target drone can be readily made available for another flight.

Science News Letter, September 10, 1949

#### MINERALOGY

### Air Is Mined for Millions In Precious Metals

► THE air is being mined for a million dollars and more worth of gold, silver and other metals.

A Los Angeles chemist, Walter A. Schmidt, told how it's done at the United Nations Scientific Conference on the Conservation and Utilization of Resources at Lake Success, N. Y.

Valuable quantities of minerals, precious and otherwise, are released into the air as industrial wastes, Mr. Schmidt explained. Smoke from improvident factories may be worth a fortune, he stated.

Industrial plants which have taken measures to recover these minerals have been well repaid.

Here are some of the findings reported by the chemist:

"One smelter recovers more than \$1,000,000 a year in gold, silver and copper out of the gases from 12 multiple-hearth roasters.

"One mint recovers more than \$100 a year in gold and silver from the gases ventilating its refining furnaces.

"One lead smelter recovers more than \$300 a year in lead and silver out of the gases from 10 sintering machines."

Science News Letter, September 10, 1949

#### GENERAL SCIENCE

### English Is Most Popular Scientific Language

► ENGLISH is now the most widely used language for scientific articles, pushing German and French into the background.

More than half, 57%, of all scientific articles are now published in English, Fletcher S. Boig, professor of chemistry at Northeastern University, Boston, Mass., found in a survey of scientific periodicals and articles.

Russian, which was of slight importance as a scientific language 20 years ago, now follows French and German as an important language of science.

Science News Letter, September 10, 1949



**U. N. SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE**—Carter Goodrich (center), professor of economics at Columbia University, New York, and programme director of UNSCCUR, discusses programme with, left to right: Antoine Goldet, director of the U. N. Department of Economic Affairs; S. S. Bhatnagar, secretary to the Government of India, Department of Scientific Research; Fairfield Osborn, president of New York Zoological Society; and Colin G. Clark, director of the Australian Bureau of Industry.

#### CHEMISTRY

### Fertilizer from Dead Sea

► THE Book of Moses and modern technology have joined forces to extract "inexhaustible" quantities of fertility from the Dead Sea, resource experts were told at Lake Success, N. Y.

An Israeli potash company is using aerial photography and solar energy to realize potentialities hinted at in the parable of Lot's wife. The curiosity that proved so fatal to that ancient lady is being coupled with the chemical ingenuity of Israeli's chemists to produce large quantities of three other elements in addition to pillars of table salt.

The most important of these is potash which is used as a fertilizer. According to Dr. M. R. Bloch of the Palestine Potash Company "the Dead Sea contains some 2,000,000,000 tons of potash and is a practically inexhaustible source of salt, magnesium, and bromine."

The biblical link was made by Dr. Bloch at a mineral section meeting of the United Nations Scientific Conference on the Conservation and Utilization of Resources. "I believe that chapters 14 to 21 of the first book of Moses should be reread in the light of modern experience," he said. "It is possible that the passage describes happenings in the vicinity of an important salt-supply

center for a Babylonian empire."

This biblical area has been carefully mapped from the air. The survey showed two natural formations where the Dead Sea brine is evaporated as if in a huge shallow dishpan. Using specially constructed pans to "harvest" the minerals left after the heat of the sun has evaporated the water content, the chemists then refine out the potash, salt, and the other components. By these techniques, vast quantities of fertilizer and valued minerals will be extracted from the Dead Sea. Vast enough, Dr. Bloch thinks, "to sustain a considerable advance in the standard of life in the world."

Science News Letter, September 10, 1949

Much of the *horsehair* used in stuffing furniture comes from the manes and tails of wild horses in Argentina; after the hair gets to America it is curled by a laborious hand process.

Much *commercial fish* is now filleted and skinned by machinery, reducing the labor involved in fish processing; all parts of the fish not reaching the human market find their way into animal feed or fertilizer.