

PSYCHIATRY

Psychiatrists Warn Vet Mental Care Endangered

► **DECLARING** that "medical care of nervous and mentally disabled veterans will deteriorate below accepted adequate standards" if the dismissal of 7,100 Veterans Administration employees goes through, the nation's psychiatrists called upon Congress to stop this action.

President George S. Stevenson of the American Psychiatric Association said that the "reduction in personnel will result in immediate deterioration of medical care to veterans and discourage remaining personnel in performance of their duties. This kind of false economy," he went on "always results in less effective treatment which ultimately means greater expense to the taxpayer."

The 7100 V. A. employees have received notice of their dismissal. Only Congress can take action to stop it.

The statement, approved by the Council of the Association, pointed out that government procedure prevents V. A. officials from telling Congressmen directly of what Dr. Stevenson called the "disastrous results which will follow" the dismissal action.

Science News Letter, March 18, 1950

ZOOLOGY

Hungry Predators To Take Heavy Livestock Toll

► **HUNGRY** coyotes, wolves and mountain lions will take a heavy toll of Western livestock this spring.

This is the bad side of an unusually mild winter, the Government official who leads a running war with such marauders declared. He is Door D. Green, Chief of the Branch of Predator and Rodent Control of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Much less snow fell on the Great Plains this year than in last winter's great blizzards. Few dead animals are now on the ranges. Predators are facing hard times, since last year they fared well and increased in number, while breeding stocks of deer, sage grouse and pheasant were severely reduced.

Mr. Green said the spring calving and lambing season—late April to early June—is the most dangerous period, since predators themselves are denning. They have extra mouths to feed.

With practically no free meat provided by snow or cold, prowlers must turn to wild prey and then to domestic animals—particularly the young, which are easily killed.

The Wildlife Service has its own ways of meeting the attacks. One is the "coyote-getter."

This device, scented with fatted meat,

explodes a charge of cyanide into a coyote's mouth when he bites on it. Other animals are not attracted by it, Mr. Green said.

Last year alone, 38,949 coyotes were "got" by the getter—nearly half of the Wildlife Service's official count of 85,489 predators killed and scalped or skinned for the record.

Predators are fought also by den hunting with dogs, shooting, trapping and poisoning. "But there are still plenty on the loose," Mr. Green added.

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WILDLIFE

Rare Trumpeter Swan Desert Their Home

► **THE** rare trumpeter swan have sprung a surprise and added a mystery. This winter they have deserted their home at the waterfowl refuge, Red Rock Refuge, Mont. This bird refuge is carefully guarded by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

According to Kenneth F. Roahen, U. S. Game Management Agent, Billings, this is the first time, to his knowledge, that no swan have spent the winter at Red Rock Lakes.

The trumpeters are not migratory waterfowl and spend the whole year in the north.

Red Rock Reservation, just west of Yellowstone Park, is one of the few remaining sites for these elusive and majestic all-white birds. Last August in Yellowstone Park and immediate vicinity the greatest number of trumpeters ever recorded—90—were counted in the annual swan census.

The whereabouts of the swan which have deserted this reservation is not known.

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ASTRONOMY

No Trace Found of Early Stage of New Star

► **MORE** than 300 Harvard photographs taken since 1892 have been searched and no positive trace of the star that blazed forth as the nearly naked eye nova Lacertae in February has been found.

Usually when a great stellar explosion does occur a very faint star is found on earlier plates that matches with the new star. The search by Dr. Dorrit Hoffleit of Harvard Observatory did show a very faint star on 11 plates that may possibly be the pre-nova star, but the photographic image of the nova taken early in February by Vainu Bappu, graduate student, is so large that astronomers can not be sure that the faint star is in the proper position.

The nova continues to remain quite bright, as American Association of Variable Star Observers reports show it was 7.2 magnitude on Feb. 20, which is half a magnitude brighter than on the two preceding nights.

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MEDICINE

Anti-Acne Ointment Found Helpful in 100% of Cases

► **GOOD** results in 100 cases treated with a cosmetically attractive anti-acne ointment are reported by Dr. Helen Dexter of the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine in the *JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION* (March) in Chicago, Ill.

The ointment, called acnomel, is a flesh-tinted, nongreasy preparation containing resorcinol, sulfur and alcohol. Dr. Dexter's patients were instructed to apply this each morning and evening after twice lathering the skin with soap and hot water and then rinsing with cold water.

Of the 100 patients following this treatment scheme, 45 had their acne completely arrested, 38 were decidedly improved and 17 were improved, Dr. Dexter reports.

In addition, the patients were instructed to omit chocolate and cola drinks from their diet and to cut down on nuts and heavily fried foods. They were "warned emphatically" to keep their hands away from their faces.

"Mere inspection of an acne patient," Dr. Dexter points out, "reveals his usual posture. The acne will be most pronounced where the hand touches the skin."

This is probably because the heat of the hand increases the fatty secretion, thus aggravating the acne. Contact of fingers with face also leads patients to injure the already existing bumps and spots, making them worse.

Emotional tension also plays a part in acne and may need special consideration.

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AGRICULTURE

Cotton Color Now Measured Automatically

► **AN INSTRUMENT** that can determine automatically the exact color of cotton is now being manufactured.

The exact color is needed to assign the cotton to the proper grade. The electronic machine to do this job was developed by Dorothy Nickerson of the Department of Agriculture and Marshall G. Powell and Richard S. Hunter of the Henry A. Gardner Laboratory in Bethesda, Md.

Called the Nickerson-Hunter Cotton Colorimeter, the instrument is expected to improve considerably the accuracy of cotton classing. After the color of the cotton has been measured automatically, the cotton is classed according to grade.

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CE FIELDS

GENERAL SCIENCE

Top Japanese Scientists Visit United States

► JAPAN'S top scientists are in the United States to make contact with the American scientific scene for the newly-elected Science Council of Japan.

The delegation consists of Dr. Naoto Kameyama, president, Dr. Sakae Wagatsuma, vice-president, and Dr. Yoshio Nishina, all members of the council. They met American scientists for the first time at a Science Service reception for the winners of the Science Talent Search.

The new Japanese science council is unique among such national organizations because it is elected by vote of all the scientists. It was created upon the advice of an American mission to Japan last year.

Dr. Kameyama is an engineer, Dr. Wagatsuma is a lawyer and social scientist and Dr. Nishina is an electronics expert.

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MEDICINE

Joint Pain of Arthritis Relieved by Chemical

► RELIEF of joint pain in rheumatoid arthritis can be achieved, usually within an hour, by a chemical known as T.E.A.B.

Discovery of this action of the chemical was made by Dr. Trevor H. Howell of St. John's Hospital and Bermondsey Mission Hospital in London.

The initials T.E.A.B. stand for tetraethylammonium bromide. The pain relief it brings lasts from five to 210 days in different patients, Dr. Howell found.

He has given the drug 55 times to 26 patients, he reports in the LANCET, medical journal published in London. Nineteen of the patients got relief from their pain. Three got no relief the first time but were helped the second and third times the drug was given.

The seven patients who did not get relief from the drug were the ones in whom the arthritis did not seem to be active.

Dr. Howell tried this chemical because it is known to block impulses of the autonomic nervous system and the nerve supply of the joints and ligaments is said to be derived from part of this system.

The first patient treated was an elderly man with a flare-up of rheumatoid arthritis in his hands. A small amount of T.E.A.B. solution was given by hypodermic injection and within an hour the pain had left. He had no more pain for three months. The next acute attack was treated the same way

with the same results. The man has now been free from pain and swelling for five months.

This "dramatic result" led Dr. Howell to try the drug in three more men and 23 women with acute rheumatoid arthritis. He suggests that while ACTH and cortisone offer hope for arthritics in the future, T.E.A.B. may be added to other methods for relieving the pain in arthritis.

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MEDICINE

Licorice in Woman's Remedy Has Female Hormone Action

► A REMEDY sold at drug stores and used each month by thousands of women for so-called female troubles now turns out to have real estrogenic (female hormone) action. It owes this, at least in part, to the licorice used to flavor the remedy.

Discovery of the female hormone action of licorice is reported by Dr. Christopher H. Costello, of Columbus, Ohio, and Dr. E. V. Lynn of the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy, to the JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN PHARMACEUTICAL ASSOCIATION (March) in Washington.

Three other plant extracts which are ingredients of the remedy also contain some estrogenic material. These three are asclepias, helonias and aletris. But the licorice, known medically as glycyrrhiza, contains significant amounts of it.

These and other plant sources of the female hormone or related chemical might furnish a cheaper source of the material than the ones now used in medicine, Dr. Costello and Dr. Lynn point out. They have worked out a method for practical isolation of the material from licorice.

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INVENTION

No Sleep Interruption With Automatic Window

► WINDOWS will close automatically when it begins to rain and open again after the rain by means of an improved device patented recently. Electric power and weather-affected controls do the job. The windows open only if the temperature outside is sufficiently high.

An electric motor is connected to a drum upon which upper and lower window sash cords are oppositely wound. A switch controlled by a thermostat sets the motor in operation with temperature changes as desired. Associated with the thermostatic switches is a bellows acted upon by precipitation to cause the motor to close the window.

In spite of these automatic attachments, the window can be raised or lowered manually at any time. The inventor is Von L. Vancil, Freeport, Texas. The patent number is 2,499,544.

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GEOLOGY

Crude Oil, Gas Reserves For Many Years to Come

► NEW finds of underground oil and natural gas during 1949 indicate that there is no immediate danger of a shortage of either liquid or gaseous fuels.

Proved reserves of crude oil and natural gas have reached new all-time peaks, the American Petroleum Institute and the American Gas Association revealed in New York in a joint report. The conclusion is based on findings of near-record breaking explorations made during 1949.

Proved reserves are the underground supplies which the oil and gas industry can draw upon for consumption. They are the reserves whose locations and extent have been proved and measured by drilling. Probable deposits of oil and gas can be determined by various scientific means. It is only by drilling that they can be "proved."

Proved reserves of petroleum and natural gas liquids were estimated at 28.3 billion barrels at the close of 1949. This is an increase of 1.5 billion barrels over the preceding year's total of 26.8 billion barrels. Natural gas liquids include condensates, natural gasoline and liquified petroleum gases.

Proved reserves of natural gas were estimated at 180 trillion cubic feet. This is an increase of 6.5 trillion cubic feet over 1948's year-end total.

How many years would be required to exhaust these known reserves is a question. Dividing the reserves by the current rate of production gives an incorrect conclusion. Oil can not be produced from the permeable rocks in which it occurs at any desired rate, the report emphasizes. The rate of flow of oil through the pores of the oil-bearing rocks is indefinitely controlled by the physical factors of the reservoir.

As a matter of fact, today's known oil can be recovered only over a period of years and at gradually declining annual rates. This has been demonstrated by past performance under all kinds of operating conditions.

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GENERAL SCIENCE

Soviet Prizes One-Third U. S. Foundation Allotment

► DURING the week the House of Representatives slapped a \$15,000,000 annual ceiling on funds the government could spend on basic research through the proposed National Science Foundation, the Soviet government handed out over \$5,000,000 or more than one third that amount in awards to scientists alone.

Not only is Congress considering putting a ceiling of \$15,000,000 on basic research, it also has no prize fund for scientific research.

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