

Dr. Roger Adams, head of the Chemistry Department at the University of Illinois, was elected foreign secretary. Dr. Walter S. Hunter, Brown University psychologist, and

Dr. Oliver E. Buckley, president of the Bell Telephone Laboratories, were elected to the Academy's council.

Science News Letter, May 6, 1950

#### MEDICINE

## Predict '50 Polio Surge

➤ MORE cases of polio will be reported this year than last, but this does not mean that the 1950 epidemic will be worse than last year's record outbreak. The diagnosing and reporting of many more mild cases and the reporting as polio of cases which are something else will bring the total up, according to Dr. Justin M. Andrews, deputy officer in charge of the federal government's Communicable Disease Center in Atlanta.

However, some medical men who work with epidemic diseases—epidemiologists—are predicting that 1950 will see a surge of polio actually greater than last year's 42,000 cases. They base this opinion on a comparison of the number of cases so far this year with the number during the same period last year.

Actually, the entire history of polio is so erratic that it makes predictions almost impossible. Many workers in the field believe that not enough knowledge about the disease has been accumulated to make predictions possible.

Indeed, some epidemiologists believe that because so many persons, having had the disease last year, are now immunized against it, the 1950 polio outbreak might thereby be held down.

Arguing against the prediction of more polio this year, these experts point out that as some diseases receive publicity they become "fashionable" among doctors. General practitioners are prone to look for the symptoms of diseases in the public eye.

Many other virus diseases produce clinical illness simulating polio. A form of mumps, two forms of equine encephalomyelitis and

the St. Louis type of encephalitis are among these diseases.

Science News Letter, May 6, 1950

#### MEDICINE

## Electric Eye Gives Safer Hypo Injections

➤ THE hypodermic injections of penicillin, vitamins and anesthetics your doctor or dentist gives can be even safer in future, thanks to a new electric eye machine for inspecting them.

The machine, developed by RCA Victor, is an adaptation of a similar machine for inspecting beverage bottles to see that there is no dirt or other gross contamination in them.

A very much more sensitive machine was needed, however, for inspecting ampules, the small glass containers in which medicines for hypodermic injections are sealed and sterilized. Heretofore this inspection has been done by girls and women in drug manufacturing plants. Because even trained, experienced inspectors did not always agree on whether there was a tiny speck of lint, glass or other contaminant in an ampule, it was impossible to have standards which could be enforced by the Food and Drug Administration.

To solve this problem and make ampules even safer, 16 members of the American Drug Manufacturers Association had the RCA Victor engineers devise the electronic ampule inspecting machine.

Science News Letter, May 6, 1950

#### CHEMISTRY

## Water, Oysters Take to Plastic Packaging

➤ THE modern, plastic way is to fetch a bag of water—not a pail. It is done with pliable synthetic materials—polyethylene, polyvinyl or cellulose films or coatings.

Plastic bags of water are souvenirs of the National Packaging Exposition in Chicago, Ill.

Oysters in their own juice are one of the foods shipped now in transparent plastic packages.

Science News Letter, May 6, 1950

## SCIENCE NEWS LETTER

VOL. 57 MAY 6, 1950 No. 18

50,600 copies of this issue printed

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.

Subscription rates: 1 yr., \$5.50; 2 yrs., \$10.00; 3 yrs., \$14.50; single copy, 15 cents, more than six months old, 25 cents. No charge for foreign postage.

Change of address: Three weeks notice is required. When ordering a change, please state exactly how magazine is now addressed. Your new address should include postal zone number if you have one.

Copyright, 1950, 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. Science Service also publishes CHEMISTRY (monthly) and THINGS of Science (monthly).

Printed in U. S. A. Entered as second class matter at the post office at Washington, D. C. under the act of March 3, 1879. Acceptance for mailing at the special rate of postage provided for by Sec. 34.40, P. L. and R., 1948 Edition, paragraph (d) (act of February 28, 1925; 39 U. S. Code 283), authorized February 28, 1950. 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.

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. STAt 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, Princeton University; Karl Lark-Horowitz, Purdue University; Kirtley F. Mather, Harvard University. Nominated by the National Academy of Sciences: Harlow Shapley, Harvard College Observatory; R. A. Millikan, California Institute of Technology; L. A. Maynard, Cornell University. Nominated by the National Research Council: Ross G. Harrison, Yale University; Alexander Wetmore Secretary, Smithsonian Institution; Rene J. Dubos, Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research. Nominated by the Journalistic Profession: A. H. Kirchofer, Buffalo Evening News; Neil H. Swanson, Baltimore Sun Papers; O. W. Riegel, Washington and Lee School of Journalism. Nominated by the E. W. Scripps Estate: H. L. Smithton, E. W. Scripps Trust; Frank R. Ford, Evansville Press; Charles E. Scripps, Scripps Howard Newspapers.

Officers—President: Harlow Shapley; Vice President and chairman of Executive Committee: Alexander Wetmore; Treasurer: O. W. Riegel; Secretary: Watson Davis.

Staff—Director: Watson Davis. Writers: Jane Stafford, A. C. Monahan, Marjorie Van de Water, Ann Ewing, Wadsworth Likely, Margaret Rallings, Sam Mathews. Science Clubs of America: Joseph H. Kraus, Margaret E. Patterson. Photography: Fremont Davis. Sales and Advertising: Hallie Jenkins. Production: Priscilla Howe. In London: J. G. Feinberg.

## Question Box

#### ENGINEERING

What is a great resource of untapped power? p. 282.

What is the unique characteristic of EXP-99? p. 277.

#### GENERAL SCIENCE

How will the director of the Science Foundation be appointed? p. 277.

Photographs: p. 275, National Academy of Sciences; p. 277, Westinghouse; p. 279, Lederle Laboratories.

#### MEDICINE

What steps should be taken to combat polio? p. 278.

#### NUCLEAR PHYSICS

What is the most recent discovery in the field of cosmic rays? p. 275.

#### PHYSIOLOGY

How was man's present brain developed? p. 279.