

GEOLOGY

Sulfur from Libya Lakes

► UNIQUE possible sources of sulfur for English industries are desert lakes in Libya, North Africa, it was revealed in London by the British Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. The sulfur will come from sulfides which were reduced from sulfates in the lake water by action of bacteria.

Great Britain needs sulfur particularly to make sulfuric acid, an essential in many industrial processes. American industries are using some 35,000 tons a day of this acid, it is estimated. The British Isles import all their sulfur, much of it now coming from the United States.

Recent surveys made by British scientists show that desert lakes in Libya are well supplied with microorganisms known as sulfate-reducing bacteria which reduce sulfates to sulfides. Sulfur can be produced from hydrogen sulfide by simple aeration.

Sulfur is now being recovered from these lakes, K. R. Butlin and J. Postgate of the British Chemical Research Laboratory state. But the recovery is only in relatively small

quantities. In the dry season sulfur is scooped up by Arabs from the bottom of the lakes and left to dry.

The quantity available is not sufficient to meet export needs. The rate of production of sulfide is low. To make the process economically feasible, the reduction of sulfates must be stepped up to about ten times the present rate.

More effective bacteria to produce sulfides from the sulfates are now being sought by the British scientists. Strains of bacteria from different parts of the world will be examined for their speed of reduction. The influence of different environments will be investigated. Methods of obtaining possible quick reducing strains by artificial means will be explored.

Science News Letter, October 21, 1950

RADIO

High Hill Near Rio Site Of City's First TV

► SUGAR LOAF mountain close to Rio De Janeiro is the site of a commercial television broadcasting station now nearing completion. The 150-foot antenna on the top of 1,300-foot Sugar Loaf will provide an extended reception area.

This TV transmitter is being erected by the International General Electric Company and will be ready for use in the near future. The equipment was constructed by General Electric's electronic department at Syracuse, N. Y. Programs of the Rio station will include studio shows and remote broadcasts from the city's race track and athletic fields.

Erection of the station on the summit of Sugar Loaf presented many difficulties because the site can not be reached by automobile. A cable car to the top for tourists brought some of the equipment. Much was carried to the top by mules.

Science News Letter, October 21, 1950

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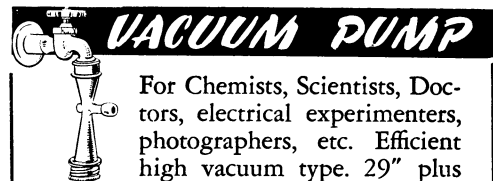
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