OCEANOGRAPHY

Birthplace of Arctic Ice

Probable birthplace of three large Arctic ice islands spotted off coast of far northern Canada. One island's course traced over period of five years.

➤ THE PROBABLE birthplace of the three large islands of ice floating in the Arctic Ocean has been sighted on the north coast of Ellesmere Island in far northern Canada.

Capt. Lawrence S. Koenig of Eilson Air Force Base, reported to the Second Alaskan Science Conference in Anchorage that he had seen there a landlocked ice sheet or shore glacier with the same characteristic markings as the floating islands. From an altitude of a few hundred feet it was impossible to tell whether the markings were water or clear ice. They gave the appearance of rivers and brooks draining the ice just like on land.

Scientists and military officials believe these islands—and others which may be discovered—might be useful as mid-ocean landing strips. They could hold camps, either military or scientific, without the danger of camping on much more fragile ice floes.

The drifting course of the third island was revealed for the first time by Capt. Koenig. First sighted in 1946 north of Point Barrow, the northernmost tip of Alaska, the island drifted in the Beaufort Current near to and beyond the North Pole. It was lost for almost two years north of Greenland, but was sighted again this August 50 miles off the coast of Ellesmere Island.

In five years the island has drifted some 3,000 miles. In all these years the shape of the island and its markings, which are its "fingerprints," changed so little that identification was easy.

Two other ice islands are being consistently followed by the Tarmagan polar weather flights. The islands are obviously different from the pack ice which fills the Arctic Ocean. While the pack ice drifts with the wind, the ice islands seem to follow the circulatory Beaufort Current, a gigantic eddy covering half the Arctic Ocean.

Science News Letter, September 29, 1951

BIOLOGY

Atomic Radiation Promises Good Effects on Food We Eat

➤ RADIATION similar to that produced by the A-bomb may have undreamed of good effects on the food we eat. This is what scientists at the Brookhaven National Laboratory, in cooperation with Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N. J., will try to find out.

Dr. James E. Gunckel of Rutgers will spend the next year or more at Brookhaven conducting experiments to determine the effects of radiation on vegetation.

Plantings will be made in concentric circles around a radioactive source. The effects of various dosages of vegetative growth, flowering and fruiting can thus be studied.

Drs. A. H. Sparrow and W. R. Singleton of the Brookhaven biology staff believe that there is a distinct possibility and hope that some such treatments will produce mutations that have horticultural and agricultural significance, both good and bad.

Science News Letter, September 29, 1951

INVENTION

Helicopter Attitude Indicator

➤ HELICOPTERS WILL be usable in bad weather with a device called an attitude indicator on which patent 2,567,212 was issued to two men, both in the U. S. Navy. They are James W. Klopp and William T. Shelton.

Science News Letter, September 29, 1951

On This Week's Cover

The first in-flight photograph of the U. S. Navy's jet fighter, Demon, appears on the cover of this week's SCIENCE NEWS LETTER, with the Missouri river in the foreground.

An experimental plane made by McDonnell Aircraft Corporation in St. Louis, it is the prototype for production models to be manufactured both by McDonnell and Goodyear Aircraft Corporation of Akron, Ohio.

MEDICINE

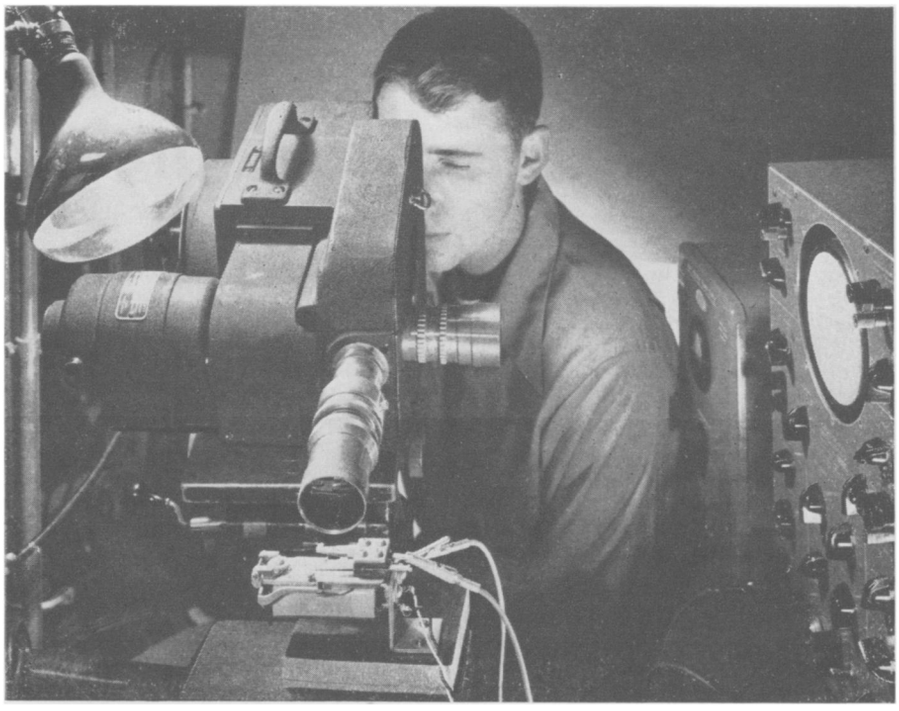
B Vitamin Clears Confused Old Minds

➤ THE B VITAMIN that prevents and cures pellagra can help old people whose mentality is affected because of hardening of their brain arteries, Dr. J. Fleetwood of Dublin, Ireland, reported to the Second International Gerontological Congress in St. Louis.

The similarity of mental symptoms in old people and in pellagra patients gave Dr. Fleetwood the idea of trying the vitamin.

Patients whose symptoms were chiefly depression, confusion and irritability improved considerably. Those in whom high blood pressure was marked showed little or no change.

Science News Letter, September 29, 1951



HIGH SPEED CAMERA—A modification of the Kodak High Speed Camera now permits both the mechanical and electrical aspects of a subject to be recorded simultaneously on the same film, as is being demonstrated above.