

PHYSICS

Detect by Atomic Debris

➤ BECAUSE AN atomic bomb contaminates slightly the air many thousands of miles away, it is possible for U. S. experts to advise President Truman that a second atomic bomb has been exploded in Russia.

The debris of an atomic explosion is very different from other materials in the air naturally. Both the United States and Soviet Russia are presumably running continuous detection devices, analyzing the atmosphere at various heights, in order to get information on any fission products that may appear as evidence that plutonium has been exploded. These detection stations would be spread over the Pacific, Alaska

and elsewhere since the prevailing winds of the world carry air from Russia and Siberia conveniently toward the east.

The possibility of this method of detecting is one of the reasons that U. S. atomic explosions have been announced long after they occurred and then with extreme vagueness as to exact times.

If Russia has exploded more than the two bombs, the first one in 1949, they have probably been detected by U. S. experts but not necessarily announced as part of the intended confusion of the Russian intelligence effort.

Science News Letter, October 13, 1951

MEDICINE

Hormones for Blood Ills

➤ ACTH AND cortisone, hormone chemicals famous for bringing relief in painful, crippling arthritis, are "useful and sometimes vital" medical tools in some diseases of the blood-forming system of the body, Dr. John J. McGraw, Jr., blood specialist of Bryn Mawr, Pa., declared at the meeting of the Medical Society of the District of Columbia in Washington.

They may actually be lifesaving in two kinds of blood disorders, he stated. These are: 1, anemia due to active destruction of the red blood cells in the circulation; 2, a kind of bleeding disease which is something like hereditary hemophilia and which doctors term thrombocytopenic purpura.

"Dramatic results" may also be obtained with ACTH and cortisone in many cases of acute leukemia in children and in a few cases of this cancerous disease in adults, he said. The good results in these cases, however, are invariably followed by a relapse.

Use of the two hormone chemicals in treatment of eye diseases was reported by Dr. Alan C. Woods of the Johns Hopkins Medical School, Baltimore.

ACTH and cortisone, he said, are "of highest value" in treating acute, self-limited inflammations. Allergic reactions of the

outer eye and cornea are among the examples he gave of conditions in which the hormone chemicals are useful.

In these eye conditions the chemicals do not affect the cause of the disease but, rather, work on the reaction of the tissues to the cause or irritant. While they may seem to bring a cure, they do not prevent recurrences of the original disorder.

ACTH and cortisone are without effect, Dr. Woods said, in the usual degenerative diseases of the eyes and they should not be used in any form of tuberculosis of the eyes.

Science News Letter, October 13, 1951

ENTOMOLOGY

Mite Forsakes Citrus For Avocado Leaves

➤ A MICROSCOPIC mite that switched its diet from citrus leaves to avocado leaves, is making trouble for fruit growers in the West.

It's the six-spotted mite, long known as a pest of the Pacific coast citrus industry. In the spring of 1950 it began to chew on the leaves of avocado trees.

When hundreds of these hard-to-see pests feed on one leaf, it turns an ugly brown along the midrib and veins and drops from the tree. In some orchards this has caused severe defoliation.

Much more damaging than the well-known avocado brown mite, the six-spotted mite was treated with certain acaricides (similar to insecticides) such as Aramite, Ovottan, Sulphenone and oil spray, with promising results.

Research at the University of California at Los Angeles under the direction of Dr. Walter Ebeling will attempt to discover which acaricide is best to use, how and when to use it.

Science News Letter, October 13, 1951



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