

HYGIENE

**Private Office Quiet
For Executive Pays**

► PRIVATE OFFICES are justified for executives because they are quiet and therefore allow the executive to work more efficiently, it appears from studies reported to the Industrial Hygiene Foundation in Pittsburgh.

A noise which lowers the efficiency of a routine worker by five percent will decrease the output of an executive by as much as 30%, the Bell Telephone Laboratories estimated. The estimate was cited in a report by S. L. Hooper of Remington Rand, Inc., former president of the Noise Abatement Council.

Office noise may be costing American business \$4,000,000 a day in inefficient operation, Mr. Hooper said. He puts noise in the same class as bad ventilation and poor lighting in its effects on human efficiency.

Science News Letter, November 29, 1952

MEDICINE

**Plastic Dresses Burns;
Doctors Peek at Healing**

► A TRANSPARENT, flexible plastic dressing for burns and other wounds that can be sprayed on from an aerosol bomb was announced by Capt. Daniel S. J. Choy, USAF (MC) of the Aero Medical Laboratory, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, at the meeting of the Association of Military Surgeons of the United States in Washington.

Only disadvantage given is the fact that the dressing is inflammable. It keeps out germs, lets the surgeon see how the wound is healing, is more comfortable than pressure dressings and peels off easily. It is a polyvinyl plastic in an ethyl acetate solution.

Science News Letter, November 29, 1952

HEREDITY

**Chemical in Cell Clue
To Way Heredity Works**

► A NEW chemical substance, once tossed out as "residue" in chemical studies of living cells, may offer a clue to the workings of heredity.

Dr. Jay Barton II, Columbia University zoologist, reporting his five years of experimentation with a previously unsuspected substance from cell nuclei (a kind of deoxyribonucleic acid, or DNA), believes this chemical may be the chemical agent of heredity.

DNA meets all of the general requirements expected of the chemical unit of heredity, Dr. Barton said. He added that the principal job now is to break down DNA into component parts representing the different factors that are inherited in reproduction.

Science News Letter, November 29, 1952



PROPAGANDA BOMBARDMENT—Members of a psychological warfare team of the U. S. Army set up a loudspeaker for broadcasting to enemy troops on the Korean front.

MARINE BIOLOGY

"Red Tide" Disappears

Winds believed responsible for break-up of red-colored areas of sea water. Scientists were prepared to disperse the lethal patches with copper sulfate solution.

► THE "RED TIDE" that swept the Florida gulf coast for eight days, leaving millions of dead fish in its wake, has disappeared.

A Coast Guard plane that surveyed the affected area from the air reported no evidence of red tide could be found. The break-up of the red tide was probably due to strong southeast winds that buffeted the Florida coast Nov. 18 and 19, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service said.

Red tide is caused by one-celled marine organisms, *Gymnodinium brevis*, that congregate by the billions in clearly defined, red-colored areas of sea water that are less salty than the water around them. These bodies of brackish water have a high concentration of food materials for the *Gymnodinium*. The Fish and Wildlife Service said the southeast winds caused a general mixing of the water, resulting in the dispersal and disappearance of the organisms.

By this sudden disappearance of red tide before the ocean wind, nature beat the scientists to the draw. The research vessel,

Alaska, left a Texas port for the affected area soon after the first reports of red tide, with her ballast tanks loaded with copper sulfate solution to be used against the tide. The chemical was meant to be distributed at the edges of the red tide to destroy the delicate balance between the low-salt water and the general ocean water. This, the scientists thought, would cause the break-up of the tide.

But when the Alaska arrived, it found only small patches of red tide, too small to try out the copper sulfate experiment. The wind had already done the mixing for the scientists.

Another red tide killed an estimated half-billion fish on the Florida coast in 1946-47. It was larger than the 1952 red tide and lasted for several months. The 1952 red tide covered an area of about 400 square miles at its peak.

Although the red tide has vanished completely, the FWS warned that it might reappear if climatic conditions become favorable again.

Science News Letter, November 29, 1952