



PICK-UP FROM ICE—Swooping down over the ice, a Coast Guard PBV makes an aerial pick-up of mail from the *Northwind*, an icebreaker that attempted to reach the northern portion of the Bering Sea last winter. The ship was unable to pierce the giant ice floes barring one sea lane to Nome. Thin, very hard floes of fast-moving ice choked the Bering Strait passage, and their rapid southward drift overcame any progress that could be made through individual floes.

GENERAL SCIENCE

Consumer Interest Ignored

Laboratory tests should answer the consumer's question concerning whether or not a product performs as its manufacturer claims, the president of Consumer's Research declares.

► The INTERESTS of the consumer-taxpayers have been lost sight of in the present controversy over battery additives, F. J. Schlink, president and technical director of Consumer's Research, Inc., Washington, N. J., charged in a release of testimony that he did not have the opportunity to present to the Senate Small Business Committee on account of suspension of the hearings.

Mr. Schlink declared that laboratory tests, unless they determine the usefulness of a product in service, are of little value to the consumer who wants to know: Does this product perform as the manufacturer claims it does in his sales literature and advertising?

Discussing the controversial tests on AD-X2, Mr. Schlink said that the MIT report indicated that the product has some effect on the battery under the abnormal set-up in the MIT laboratory, but the important question in which the consumer would be interested, namely, does the product give his automobile battery longer life as claimed or restore it to normal functioning, was not revealed or discussed. The Bureau of Standards' tests, Mr. Schlink said,

set up laboratory conditions that reflect the action of the product on a battery under load, as when operating the starter of a car.

Support of the National Bureau of Standards was urged by Mr. Schlink as one of the consumer protective agencies of the government. The Bureau of Standards, he declared, has high standing as an impartial testing agency whose findings would be accepted without question by the courts, the division of mail fraud investigation of the Post Office Department, the Federal Trade Commission, the Food and Drug Administration, and Better Business Bureaus throughout the country in cases of misleading claims and advertising that come under the scrutiny of various governmental bodies.

Scientists generally give no weight to testimonials as evidence of the value of a product, Mr. Schlink explained. They correctly hold that the opinion of an unskilled person or one not professionally qualified has no value in judging the performance or lack of performance of a product. In cases at law, testimony by laymen about scientific and technical matters has no standing.

Science News Letter, July 18, 1953

NUTRITION

Stale Bread as Easy To Digest as Fresh

► PEOPLE MAY like fresh bread better, but stale bread is just as easy to digest. Laboratory tests showing this and confirming some German studies on humans are reported by Drs. S. S. Jackel, A. S. Schultz and W. E. Schaefer of Fleischmann Laboratories, Standard Brands, Inc., New York, in *Science* (July 3).

The tests were made because these scientists had previously found that putting a small amount of special enzyme, bacterial alpha-amylase, into bread formulas greatly reduced the rate of staling. In the course of these studies the scientists at first thought they had evidence that stale bread was less digestible than fresh. The difference was reconciled when it was realized that it was a question of how well the bread sample was pulled apart to let digestive enzymes get at all parts of it.

Science News Letter, July 18, 1953

ENGINEERING

Trees and Shrubs Affect Comfort Inside the House

► THE WAY your yard is landscaped with trees, shrubs and hedges determines to some extent how cool you will be in your house during the sultry summer.

Research at College Station, Tex., on a model house equipped with a yardful of movable model trees, bushes and hedges showed that wind patterns are disturbed by the greenery. This, in turn, can affect the way delightful breezes circulate through the house.

Other factors affecting inside comfort are the way the house is oriented and the window patterns, the Texas A. and M. Engineering Experiment Station reports.

Science News Letter, July 18, 1953

CYTOLOGY

Virus Disease Attack Penetrates Within Cell

► A METHOD of attack upon virus disease, which uses subversive chemical methods of penetrating within cells, is being attempted by Dr. R. E. F. Matthews of Britain's Agricultural Research Council at Molteno Institute, Cambridge.

The procedure is to incorporate into the nucleic acid of the virus a chemical so similar to a normal part of the virus that it will effect a replacement, but so different that it makes a virus particle containing it incapable of further multiplication.

Experiments are upon tobacco mosaic virus, which is the standard "guinea pig" among viruses. The research, reported in *Nature* (June 13), is one of the attempts to discover facts that may be helpful in understanding and perhaps combating various virus diseases, even those affecting man.

Science News Letter, July 18, 1953