

GENERAL SCIENCE

New Publications Policy

Department of Commerce officials now outlining new policy concerning publication of results of tests on commercial products by National Bureau of Standards.

► WHAT POPULAR pamphlets resulting from tests on commercial products at the National Bureau of Standards will be available to the public is now being decided by Department of Commerce officials.

The new publications policy currently being worked out, SCIENCE SERVICE learned, will affect not only the availability of Bureau Circular 504, covering battery additives, but other Bureau circulars on sale at the Government Printing Office. It will also affect publication to the public of results of research on commercial products being run, or that will in the future be tested, at the Bureau of Standards.

Fate of the few hundred copies of National Bureau of Standards Circular 504 now left at the Government Printing Office hangs in the balance. The controversial pamphlet was snatched from GPO shelves and impounded last spring at the height of the storm aroused by the firing of Dr. Allen V. Astin as director of the Bureau. (See SNL, April 11, p. 231.)

Dr. Astin was reinstated by Secretary of Commerce Sinclair Weeks in August, and all of the special studies the Secretary ordered at the time of the firing have now been completed.

Revealed recently was a report on the Bureau's battery testing activities by a special committee of the National Academy of Sciences. It upheld previous Bureau tests, stating that the battery additive Ad-X2 was "without merit." (See SNL, Nov. 28, p. 339.)

Even though the scientists' committee has given the Bureau an "excellent" rating, however, the Standards' circular on battery additives cannot today be bought at the Government Printing Office.

When it could be bought by the public, Bureau Circular 504 was a steady selling item, averaging between 150 and 200 copies per month during the 27 months it was available. Of an original stock of 5,600, only 564 were left for sale at the time of its impoundment. GPO officials estimate that perhaps a hundred or so of these 564 may have been drawn for use of Commerce and Bureau authorities, newspapermen and scientists during the seven-month controversy.

Reconsideration of the publication policy on Bureau pamphlets results from the report of a special committee set up last April to evaluate the present functions and operations of the Bureau. Headed by Dr. Mervin J. Kelly of Bell Telephone Laboratories, the committee recommended in October that "the policy and establishment of the non-technical procedures on commercial

product tests be the responsibility of the Secretary of Commerce." (See SNL, Oct. 24, p. 262.)

When results of the Kelly committee survey were reported on Oct. 16, Secretary of Commerce Weeks stated that this recommendation included "policies as to the publication of the results of such [commercial product] tests." What the new publication policy will be has not yet crystallized.

Although testing of commercial products is an extremely small part of the work done at Standards, it is in this area that the Bureau most frequently comes to the attention of the general public.

Most recent of such cases was controversy concerning the battery additive, AD-X2. Dr. Astin's dismissal as director of the Bureau by Secretary of Commerce Weeks was on the grounds that the Bureau was not sufficiently "objective" in its battery additive tests. His later reinstatement was recommended not only by the Kelly committee but also by the Visiting Committee of the Academy, which had been asked to suggest a replacement for Dr. Astin. (See SNL, April 25, p. 263.)

Charges that the Bureau was not "objective" have now been proved wrong, but the Bureau report that was part of the controversy, Circular 504, is not yet again on sale to the public.

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WHO Ranks Third

► THE CURRENT size of the World Health Organization, which totals 84 nations since Yemen has now signed its constitution, shows that the nations of the world put health above everything except communications.

The 84-member WHO is outranked only by the 113-member International Telecommunications Union and the 93-member Universal Postal Union among the specialized agencies of the United Nations. The UN itself numbers only 60 members.

WMO, the World Meteorological Organization, now counts 79 members. Next come UNESCO and FAO, each with 68 members, ILO with 66, ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization) with 59 members, and the International Monetary Fund and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development with 54 members each.

Two other specialized UN agencies are

• RADIO

Saturday, Dec. 12, 1953, 3:15-3:30 p.m. EST
"Adventures in Science" with Watson Davis, director of Science Service, over the CBS Radio Network. Check your local CBS Station.

W. T. Nichols, director of the general engineering department, Monsanto Chemical Company, and C. G. Kirkbridge, president, Houdry Process Corporation, who are president and president-elect, respectively, of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers, which is holding its 46th Annual Meeting on December 13 in St. Louis, will discuss "Chemical Engineering in Modern Industry."

PSYCHOLOGY

Employers Told How to Recognize Alcoholics

► HERE IS how to recognize the alcoholic in the earlier phase of this disorder, which affects between 2,000,000 and 4,000,000 in the United States.

The Industrial Hygiene Foundation meeting in Pittsburgh, Pa., was told by Elizabeth D. Whitney of the Boston Committee on Alcoholism to watch for these signs:

1. Consistent tardiness or absence on Monday mornings, and frequent occurrences of leaving work early on Friday afternoons.

2. Recurring excuses for absence due to minor illnesses, such as colds, virus, stomach upsets.

3. Irritability in an otherwise placid worker, criticism of others, arguments, disinterest in work, slow down in production by a worker who formerly led in his department, recurring mistakes for which he defends himself, and minor accidents which he blames on others or on equipment. Pertinent examples might be found in mood swings from showy exaggeration and bragging to low periods when he avoids all personal relationships.

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not yet officially in existence, but each has had some nations sign its constitution. These are the International Trade Organization and the Intergovernmental Maritime Consultative Organization.

WHO's 84 members include the Soviet Union and eight other "eastern European" nations, as its officials politely term the Iron Curtain nations. These nations have been inactive since the cold war became hot, but they have not withdrawn as members.

Yemen, latest nation to join WHO, apparently did so after trying out the organization. About two years ago WHO had a request, through the UN, to send assistance to Yemen which had become alarmed about its health situation when some cases of plague occurred. Specialists were sent and evidently the assistance given the country in its fight for health brought full realization of WHO's value.

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