

BIOLOGY

Experimental Animals' Food Found Radioactive

➤ RADIOACTIVE contamination of food as a result of nuclear weapons tests is very likely to interfere with "carefully planned biological experiments."

Dr. C. G. Clayton of the radiotherapy department at the Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, England, reports in *Nature* (April 20) that he was forced to abandon a series of experiments when it was found his control group of rats had received contaminated food.

Measurements of the amount of radioactivity in food samples showed cabbage and cauliflower and dried peas had the greatest contamination. Carrots, flour and sugar were significantly less radioactive.

Cesium-137 is suggested by Dr. Clayton as the probable contaminant in one sample of cabbage. Neither strontium-90 nor yttrium-90 could account for the gamma activity demonstrated.

The British scientist concluded that even where radioactive contamination is "well below human tolerance levels" its effect on biological experimentation has not been "fully appreciated."

Science News Letter, June 29, 1957

PSYCHIATRY

Mentally Ill Treated In Therapeutic Group

➤ BECAUSE "people need people," mental patients improve and gain self control when they are treated in community meetings and when the patient's whole time in the hospital, 24 hours a day, is considered therapy.

What happened when such a "therapeutic community" was introduced in a receiving ward of a psychiatric treatment center at the U. S. Naval Hospital, Oakland, Calif., is reported in *Mental Hygiene* (April) by Cdr. Harry A. Wilmer, USNR, now of the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md.

Seclusion rooms were never used. No physical restraints were permitted.

Soothing injections of barbiturates were reduced from the 314 doses given to 440 patients in four months before the new system was introduced to only 29 doses given to 443 patients in a similar length of time.

Instead of putting the patient into a "quiet room" where he can converse alone with his voices undisturbed by the voices of reality, he is now put into a group. There the mentally ill talk to the mentally ill in a way a doctor probably never could. The patients talk and the doctor listens.

And the patients talk kindly, intuitively, honestly, firmly. Some are sicker than the patient they help.

"People need people," Cdr. Wilmer comments. "To recover from mental illness, people need people even more."

Science News Letter, June 29, 1957

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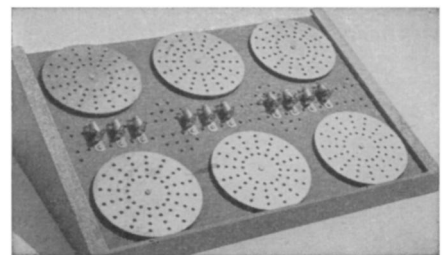
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