

are still charged for canes as a "medical" expense.

Comparing discipline problems in the U. S. with those abroad, Dr. Vredevoe listed some factors that make it harder to enforce discipline in the U. S.

Among the factors are lack of one dominant culture or religion, confused standards and attitudes toward law enforcement, longer and more rigidly enforced compulsory education, use of cars by many high school students, population mobility, resulting in more transfers and less home stability, confused attitudes about discipline and authority in the home, and shortage of competent administrators and teachers to meet the demand of a rising enrollment.

Schools in the U. S. often are asked to play the role of parent and church, "an impossible task," Dr. Vredevoe said. Despite

the discipline handicap in the U. S. school systems, Dr. Vredevoe found certain advantages in the systems here not generally shared in Europe or the Middle East.

Among U. S. advantages are the closer relationship between home and school, emphasis on the worth of the individual and broad opportunities regardless of social or economic background; the comprehensive secondary school program that can be varied according to the abilities of individual students, and improved professional status of the American teacher.

He also called attention to the recent status rise in the U. S. of the "egghead" in secondary schools, and the accompanying decline in the athlete and hot rodder.

There also is much greater research here in the areas of child growth, development and guidance.

• Science News Letter, 79:19 January 14, 1961

with this kind of prototype reactor, he said, but not the first reactor accident.

He said the accident may have resulted from a chemical reaction, evolution of hydrogen, a booster-type explosion, or "criticality" (a running away, so-to-speak, of the chain reaction).

Neither the cause of the accident nor the full extent of damage or exposure will be known for some time. Decontamination and investigation must proceed slowly, Mr. Hayes said, to avoid undue risk from radiation to those persons involved in examination and cleaning-up of the site.

The explosion, which caused the death of three men, occurred about 40 miles from Idaho Falls, a city of about 34,000 people.

• Science News Letter, 79:20 January 14, 1961

EDUCATION

Students Are Uninformed

► COLLEGE STUDENTS are poorly informed about current affairs, Dr. Josef E. Garai of the Staten Island Community College reported.

They know more about entertainment, sports and well known brands than the important issues of the day and the persons involved in them, he reported at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in New York.

Dr. Garai questioned 437 students enrolled in five of the leading colleges in the metropolitan New York area to determine the level of their information on events of the day. Eighty-one questions required identification of persons, places, objects or issues of importance in political life. Twelve of these referred to people or events in the entertainment or sports world and to certain brand names.

Only 17% of the students knew the name of the U. S. Secretary of Defense; only 5.1% knew the name of the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare; 4.6% knew the name of the capital of Australia; and in this space age, only 7.4% knew the

weight of the heaviest satellite (5 tons) still circling the earth and the name of the launching country (Russia).

However, 65% were familiar with the comic page character Pogo; and 61% knew that entertainer Ernie Kovacs is married to Edie Adams.

The colleges involved in the study are the Juilliard School of Music, Staten Island Community College, New York University School of Commerce, Pratt Institute and Hunter College. Since 1958, however, there has been a rise in the general level of information among these students, a comparison of a study made then with the 1960 study showed.

The information level and awareness of present day world issues increased remarkably, however, among a group of students queried who were required to read the New York Times daily. Testing showed a score rise from an initial average of 18% on a pretest before the start of the compulsory news reading in February, 1960, to 49% in March, 68% in April and 80% in May.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Many Reactor Accidents

► THE FATAL ACCIDENT at the Idaho test station Tuesday night (Jan. 3) is not the first reactor mishap in the history of the United States Atomic Project to cause injury or death as an Atomic Energy Commission spokesman has claimed.

There have been at least two deaths and more than 30 injuries, resulting in burns, radiation sickness and even amputation from AEC reactor accidents. But these are from accidents in "critical experiments facilities" reactors as distinguished from "operating" reactors, the AEC spokesman told SCIENCE SERVICE.

The critical experiments facilities are used for the testing and study of fissionable materials at various degrees of enrichment and different shapes. They differ from operating

reactors only in that the fuel assembly is flexible rather than fixed in order that the assembly may be changed quickly and easily according to the test being made.

In the experiments facilities, the experimental chain reaction is maintained at or near zero power so that little radiation is emitted. Operating reactors, which produce nuclear materials, often are maintained at high levels of power.

The Idaho reactor in which the recent explosion occurred is neither the experimental or the operating type of reactor. It is a "prototype" of the operating type of reactor, Mr. Dan Hayes of the AEC office of health and safety said. The Idaho accident was the first fatal accident connected

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