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INVENTION

Current U.S. Patents

A new colorless paint for use in areas where smog is a problem will protect plants from being smothered by oxidizing substances in the air—By William McCann

► **TREES OR CROPS** can now be sprayed with a coat of colorless "paint" to protect them from being smothered by smog.

Smog is a continually growing problem in many parts of the country, reports Dr. Sanford M. Siegel, White Plains, N. Y. Eye and respiratory irritations in man are often blamed on smog. Crop yields decrease, plants often become discolored, stop growing, and, in extreme cases, die as a result of it, he said.

One estimate places the visible smog damage alone at \$8 million in California every year, and roughly \$18 million annually along the Atlantic seaboard.

Dr. Siegel, researcher in physical biochemistry at Union Carbide Corporation, New York, N.Y., has invented a "paint without pigment," designed to protect plants even at extreme levels of polluted atmosphere.

The paint consists of an elastic porous film combined with a chemical agent, called an anti-oxidant. The anti-oxidant protects the plant from oxidizing substances such as ozone, peroxides or nitrogen oxides in the air. These oxidizing substances virtually smother the plant.

The "paint," field tested in Southern California last fall under the supervision of the local parks commission, works against high levels of ozone one would never find even in such smog-ridden areas as Los Angeles or Washington, D.C., Dr. Siegel said. Test results have shown that there is a "substantial difference in improvement" between treated and untreated plants.

The coating earned patent 3,178,855 from the U.S. Patent Office and patent rights were assigned to Union Carbide Corporation.

Suitcase-Chair

A unique device that can quickly be folded out to form a beach chair or folded up to make a suitcase earned patent 3,179,465 for Arthur H. Roberts, Brooklyn, N.Y. The seat and back rest of the chair are the walls of the suitcase. The walls are lined with tube-shaped metal bars to provide body support. Metal tubes are also used for the U-shaped legs of the chair and as arm and leg rests.

As a suitcase it has plenty of carrying space, reports Mr. Roberts. In addition, the suitcase-chair is lightweight and durable.

Food Server for Airplanes

Meals can now be served on planes from a tray-carrying cabinet that rides up and down the aisles on a track.

The device can be used to serve a large number of passengers at once, reports inventor Martin Umanoff, Huntington, N.Y.

The system, which could also be adapted for use on trains or buses, can be locked at any desired point along the track. It can also be removed from the track quickly during an emergency.

The food serving system earned patent 3,179,208, and patent rights were assigned to R. A. MacPlum Industries, Inc., Clifton, N.J.

Other Interesting Patents

A newly patented sprinkling system uses the water from the family pool to help put out brush or forest fires. Water from the pool or a special tank is pumped into the system, which extends around the roof of the house. The system earned patent 3,179,181 for Candido Banzato, Beverly Hills, Calif.

A new inflatable body support system protects a pilot or astronaut from the sudden starting, stopping and vibration in a plane or space ship. The system earned patent 3,179,360 for Sid W. Shelton, Costa Mesa, Calif., and Richard L. Crossman, Tallmadge, Ohio. Patent rights were assigned to the Government through the Secretary of the Air Force.

For a list of registered patent attorneys and agents and other patent Office information, write the Commissioner of Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231, or call 202-697-4058 for specific information.

• Science News Letter, 87:302 May 8, 1965

INVENTION

Federal Board to Auction Patents Suggested

► **WHO SHOULD HAVE** the rights to a patentable process or item developed by private industry using government funds? One solution is a special Federal board, with the power to take any action including auctioning patents off to the highest bidder.

This is the suggestion of Jacob Rabinow, president of Rabinow Electronics, Inc., a division of Control Data Corporation.

By offering a patent to the highest bidder, the Government could be relatively sure that it would go to the company best prepared and most willing to develop it, said Mr. Rabinow.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration has a system called "Technology Utilization," by which information on certain patents developed under NASA contracts is made available for public use upon application to NASA. This is "a little clumsy," said Mr. Rabinow, but it works reasonably well.

Mr. Rabinow spoke at the 175th Anniversary Symposium of the U.S. Patent System in Washington, D.C.

• Science News Letter, 87:302 May 8, 1965