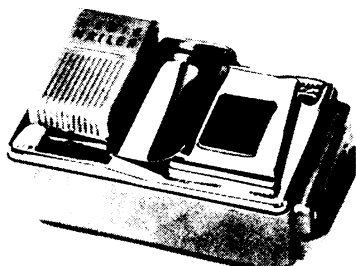


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PUBLIC HEALTH

Peace Corps Planning To Fight Snail Fever

➤ **SNAIL FEVER**, or schistosomiasis, is the target of medical workers in the Peace Corps, although the war will begin in a small way.

The Corps already has worked successfully with tuberculin testing in 12 small villages of Malawi, **SCIENCE SERVICE** was told by Dr. Thomas Drake, one of 75 physicians in the organization.

Among speakers at an open forum in Washington, D.C., were experts on the disease, including Dr. Claude Lambert of Basel, Switzerland, who collaborated with Dr. Max Wilhelm, a Swiss chemist, in perfecting the new drug, Ambilhar. The drug is not the only approach to the snail fever problem, and Peace Corps teams may try to help by providing sanitary water conditions and snail control.

Brazil and the Philippines were suggested as possible places to start the Peace Corps battle.

• Science News Letter, 89:159 March 5, 1966

Nature Note

Friendly Spiders

➤ **PEOPLE MISJUDGE** spiders on two counts. They think a spider is an insect and a fierce offensive creature.

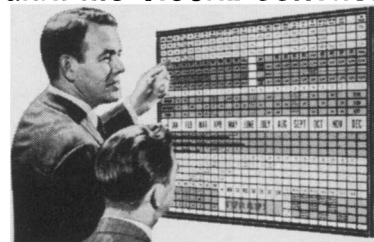
The spider is not an insect but an arachnid. It has eight legs instead of the insect's six; its head and thorax are fused together instead of being separated like the insect's, and it has four pairs of bright simple eyes on the top of its head instead of the large compound eyes of an insect. The name of its class, Arachnida, comes from a mythological Greek girl, Arachne, who was so proud of her weaving that she challenged the goddess Athena to a contest. For her presumption, Arachne was turned into a spider and condemned to weave webs forever.

Spiders are generally shy creatures that pounce only on something they want to eat, but will attack when frightened.

One of the most marvelous activities of spiders is the manufacturing of silk in their own bodies and the beautiful, useful webs they spin—webs that are as varied in shape and size as the different spiders that spin them. Spiders may have about six spinnerets on the underside of their soft round abdomens. Each spider has control over the kind of silk it produces. It may be a firm, dry silk strand used to form the radial structural strands of the spider web; a sticky elastic silk thread used for the spiral of the web, upon which victims adhere; a fine strand spun out wherever a spider travels, by which the creature can retreat to safety in an emergency. These strands are so uniform in diameter and unaffected by changes in temperature and humidity that scientists have used them as cross hairs in telescopic sights.

• Science News Letter, 89:159 March 5, 1966

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