

To the Editor

Smallpox in the Blankets

Sir:

About Mr. De Bourcia's letter (Science, History and Old Wounds) in the June 3 issue of SCIENCE NEWS:

You may be interested in my unfortunately vague recollections of a lecture I heard touching upon the subject.

I attended a lecture at the University of Connecticut at Storrs, Conn. As I remember, it was to the ROTC and, again from memory, it was given by the chairman of the chemistry department of that institution.

The main thrust of the lecture was in praise of biological and chemical warfare; the effectiveness of gas was compared with high explosive weight for weight. The lecturer then demolished the idea that biological warfare was a new and untried weapon by pointing out that it had been used most effectively against the American Indians by infecting blankets with smallpox and offering the same blankets as presents to the Indians.

Haig P. Papazian
New Haven, Conn.

The Foehn

Sir:

About your explanation of the foehn, or Chinook wind (SN: 5/20): One sentence nearly sums up the offered explanation: "The foehn generates its own heat—by compression." This does not account for the phenomenon, for the relatively high temperature and velocity of the foehn are its definitive characteristics.

The important elements of the foehn mechanics are these two:

- The absorption of great quantities of heat of condensation (600 or more calories per gram at the temperatures of the high elevations) and the heat of crystallization of ice if an important amount of the precipitation is snow.

- A high horizontal pressure gradient across the mountain range to produce very rapid movement of the air from one side of the range to the other without allowing time for tremendous dissipation of heat by radiation and/or convection.

Of course temperature changes attendant upon the adiabatic expansion and compression of gas are involved

too, but obviously they do not account for the relatively high temperature of the foehn.

Harold P. Lucy
Peoria, Ill.

Fu-Fu Recognition

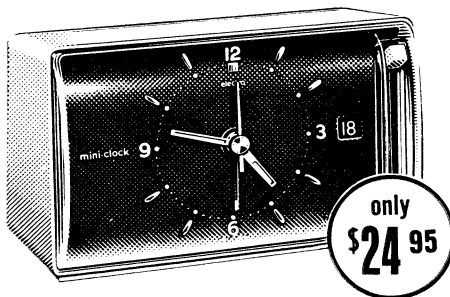
Sir:

I have noted the news article entitled, "Instant Fu-Fu for West Africa" (SN: 5/6). We have worked on the development of traditional West African foods in the Food Research Institute for some time now. The research report (1962–1964) of the Food Research Institute in Ottawa, Canada, gives a brief description of the two traditional foods dehydrated in the Food Research Institute with the assistance of S. Y. Safo from Ghana. In November 1964, samples of fu-fu prepared by Safo and myself were sent to several people in Ghana.

It is disappointing that our contribution in the dehydration of traditional West African foods was not recognized.

Norman W. Tape
Food Research Institute
Canada Department of Agriculture
Ottawa, Ontario

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Modern Pavlovian

Sir:

Patricia McBroom's sketch of me and my work (SN: 5/27) was one of the best things that has been written on the subject, and one that I have enjoyed and prized most. Her skill in description and sifting out what is significant and dramatic greatly impresses me. I was glad to see Nelson County included! Many thanks.

W. Horsley Gantt,
The Johns Hopkins Medical School,
Baltimore, Md.

A Discordant Note

Sir:

While I am sorry to strike a false note in the chorus of adulation, I must say that in my opinion the older form of cover was preferable to the present "popular magazine" form of cover that you are now using. For that matter, I prefer the original title SCIENCE NEWS LETTER.

The older format made it look more like the serious publication it actually is, and less like something to catch the eye on news-stands.

J. M. Reynolds
Blairtown, N.J.