

GENERAL SCIENCE

U. S. Polar Year Funds Fail Passage by Congress

Action on Bills of Scientific Interest Also Taxes Colored Margarins and Provides Huge Sum for Pine Blister War

AUTHORIZATION for sufficient funds to allow this country to participate in the Second Polar Year in 1932-1933 and in the International Geological Congress in 1932, failed to pass the House in the closing hours of the session because of objections to consideration on the part of certain House members.

An enormous program for soil erosion work and technical study of conservation of rainfall for the Bureau of Agricultural Engineering passed the Senate, but failed of passage in the House.

The oleomargarin law was amended so as to put all yellow colored margarins under the ten cent per pound tax previously applied only to those margarins artificially colored. The new regulations are to be applied because of the recent development of natural colored palm oil margarins. Dairy farmers contended they could not compete with yellow margarins, with a butter flavor, which was subject only to the quarter of a cent per pound tax. Objections to the new regulations were voiced by soy bean growers of the country who say they are being hit along with palm oil importers. Soy bean growers took the position that agriculture was not helped by legislation favoring one agricultural group over another. The strongest arguments for the dairy farmers were advanced by nutrition experts, who told Congress of the advantages to health of the vitamins in milk and butter. Because vitamin A has been so often associated with yellow color in carrots and butter and other foods, it was necessary to get the opinion of an expert regarding the yellow color of the palm oil. Dr. E. V. McCollum, professor of nutrition at Johns Hopkins University, told congressional committees that the "yellow color, or at least almost all of the yellow color in palm oil is cycopin, rather than carotin, mother substance of vitamin A."

The maternity and infancy aid act passed both Senate and House, but with such differences that the conference re-

port, though accepted by the House, did not come to a vote in the Senate. The House added to the Senate bill's authorization of such work by the U. S. Children's Bureau, an amendment providing for the setting up of county rural health units to be administered by the U. S. Public Health Service.

The Bureau of Plant Industry and the U. S. Forest Service were provided by this Congress with an enormous fund for fighting white pine blister rust in western forests. The total amount in various bills ran well over \$700,000. In the U. S. national forests alone there are five billion feet of merchantable white pine timber worth \$25,000,000, in addition to one million acres of young white pine worth about \$180 per acre. On privately owned lands there is also an immense acreage which would be a

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Legislator For Science Lost As Senator Ransdell Retires

RETIREMENT from the Senate with the end of the last session of Senator Joseph B. Ransdell, Democrat, of Louisiana, marks a loss to science not easily compensated.

Senator Ransdell has been active in sponsoring many public health measures, most notable of which have been the establishment of the National Leprosarium at Carville, La., and the National Institute of Health now operating under the direction of the U. S. Public Health Service. In this institute, scholarships may be given to research workers in order that they may pursue research work in cancer, the common cold, and other diseases the control of which is of vast importance to mankind.

Senator Ransdell also introduced and pushed legislation which was recently enacted establishing a national hydraulic laboratory at the U. S. Bureau of Stand-

ards; and it was an amendment which he offered to a pending agricultural appropriation bill that first gave the U. S. Bureau of Plant Industry the means to work for the eradication of the pink bollworm. Flood control legislation has long been another subject upon which he has labored.

The Bureau of Mines was authorized to establish a mining experiment station at College Park, Maryland.

A bill authorizing the collection of crime statistics passed both houses and was signed by the President.

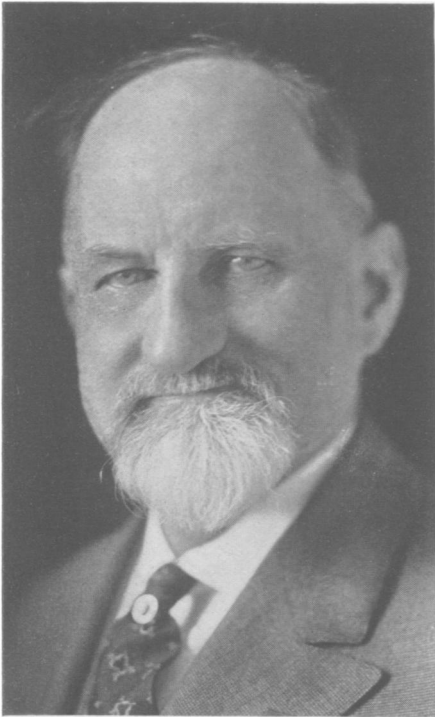
Isle Royale in Lake Superior was made a national park, but the Everglades National Park bill failed to get through the House, though it passed the Senate.

A memorial in Washington to the late Stephen T. Mather, former head of the U. S. National Park Service, was authorized. The Stephen T. Mather Appreciation Committee has long had in mind several methods of preserving to the nation's memory the work of the father of the national park system. The memorial in Washington is only one of these. Another plan is to erect in each of the 23 national parks and 33 national monuments a bronze plaque decorated with a bas relief bust of Mather, an epitome to his work.

Science News Letter, March 14, 1931

In his farewell speech to the Senate last week, Senator Ransdell chose for his theme: The Conservation of Public Health—The Most Important Problem Confronting Mankind.

Senator Ransdell's work was lauded at the close of his speech, by Senators Hatfield of West Virginia and Copeland of New York, both physicians. Senator Copeland said that the United States lagged behind eight or nine other countries in the control of disease. The New York Senator also declared that everyone should read particularly that



Underwood and Underwood
FORMER SENATOR RANSDALL

portion of Senator Ransdell's speech which points out that any increased span of life now enjoyed in this country is due to the elimination of many childhood diseases, whereas men of mature years face prospects of death from disease exactly as menacing as those with which we were confronted fifty years ago.

Science News Letter, March 14, 1931

PSYCHOLOGY

Feeling Important Helps Heal Crippled Children

THE IMPORTANCE of feeling important is being emphasized by the Social Service Department of the University of Michigan Hospital at Ann Arbor in its special department for physically handicapped children which last year enrolled 1,484 students.

A feeling of inferiority and uselessness among children who are physically handicapped is believed by the hospital authorities to cause a slowing up of physical recovery and possibly later to make the child's life a burden both to himself and to society.

By discovering and developing the special abilities of child patients, the department of special education attempts to make the children forget their weakness and develop a new interest in life.

Science News Letter, March 14, 1931

MEDICINE

Cross-eyes Are Corrected by New Device Like Stereoscope

Method Devised by English Physician Teaches Eyes to Work Together and Can Be Made Into a Game for Children

A NEW method of correcting cross-eyes or squint, scientifically termed strabismus, has been devised by Dr. Ernest E. Maddox of Bournemouth, who just reported it to the Royal Society of Medicine, London. The new method does not claim to replace the old ways of correcting strabismus by glasses, prisms, or operation, but supplements them.

Dr. Maddox suspected that many of the more incurable cases of cross-eyes are due to persistence of the infantile inability to co-ordinate the movements of the two eyes. He has developed an apparatus designed to discourage the tendency of each eye to do business on its own account instead of in partnership.

The principle which he employs is the use of the hand of the squinter to educate his squinting eye, imitating the natural process of infancy in which the hand and eye mutually perfect their training by trial and error.

This new instrument, the cheiroscope, takes its name from two Greek words meaning "hand" and "look." It is similar to the familiar stereoscope but whereas the stereoscope is held in the hand and the eyes look straight forward at a picture placed in a carrier opposite the lenses, the cheiroscope is tipped so that the lenses are above a horizontal tray surface which replaces the picture carrier and on which the child can play or draw. The child looks down on the tray and a vertical plane divides the field of vision.

If a bead is placed on the tray beneath one eye, a ring on the other half of the tray seen by the other eye will appear surrounding the bead or may be so placed by the child. On the theory that left hand and left eye work together, as do right hand and right eye, the hand on the side of the poor eye is kept busy.

The eye belonging to the hand is tempted to the spot with which the hand is occupied and does its best to help it, even though it only wakes up to do so gradually, while at the same time the surgeon learns what the child's brain is doing by watching the hand.

It is all a game to the child. A fierce open-mouthed lion on one side can be fed by red beads on the other. The picture of a pretty little girl on one side can have a bead necklace constructed round its neck by the child, one eye all the time seeing the little girl, the other the beads.

There are modifications of this apparatus used for different degrees and types of squint. Dr. Maddox points out that there is no reason why the "hand and eye" principle should not be turned to account with an ordinary stereoscope. Here a finger on the side of the amblyopic eye must point out details of the picture, and the trick of this procedure is to prevent the finger from traveling across the mid-line to the picture in front of the good eye.

Dr. Maddox promised that with perseverance and concentration squint training will bring results.

Science News Letter, March 14, 1931

ASTRONOMY

Friday, March 13, Marked Triple Anniversary

FRIDAY, March 13, far from being unlucky, marked a triple anniversary for astronomers.

Exactly 150 years ago on that day, this year, the first extension to the limits of the solar system was made when William Herschel, then a musician of purely local repute at Bath, England, discovered the planet Uranus through his little six-inch reflecting telescope. That was on March 13, 1781.

On the same date in 1855 there was born in Boston Percival Lowell, who was to found the great modern observatory bearing his name.

And on March 13 last year Prof. Lowell's successors announced the discovery of the planet Pluto, the third modern discovery of a major planet. The second time was in 1846, but on September 23, when Galle, in Germany, discovered Neptune.

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