

whether it be pestilence, flood, earthquake, or an armed attack from another nation. The spirit of all true communities includes this and more. It includes the preparation long beforehand of ways and means to render aid when needed. Spirit and organization—neither of these is vital without the other. The task here set will not be light, nor yet will it be impossible. And the motives to perform it are powerful. For unless the great waste-land of conflict between nation and nation is reclaimed, nations may expect war after war, each more cruel, in its intent than all the wars before it, and more terrible in its instruments.

Science News Letter, July 27, 1940

PALAEONTOLOGY

Gigantic Toothed Birds Described in New Bulletin

"SCARCE as hens' teeth" wouldn't have been an apt simile, back in dinosaurian days. Birds had teeth then—plenty of them, and plenty sharp, too. Toothed giants in feathers are featured in a new publication on fossil birds of North America, by Dr. Alexander Wetmore, assistant secretary of the Smithsonian Institution.

One of these nightmare birds was a creature six feet long, built more or less on the lines of a modern loon, that lived in the seas that rolled a hundred million years ago where the plains of Kansas now are. This aquatic monster was practically wingless, but was a powerful swimmer and diver. It must have been a terror to little fishes. Another group of toothed birds were built like gulls, though not directly related to modern gulls. They could fly as well as swim.

These and other birds, belonging to families long since vanished from the earth, were striving for their place in the sun when dinosaurs were still a regnant, but passing, dynasty in the animal world. The real chance of the bird tribe came later, about 60 million years ago, at the turn of an epoch when the great reptiles had become extinct and the mammals, with which birds now share the earth, were also beginning their rapid development.

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A new method of *marking timber* is to use a paint gun, instead of an axe.

Germany, planning for post-war activities, announces as a primary project a grand-scale *housing* program, with war veterans receiving preference.



PLENTY OF TEETH

If Hesperornis were living today he would certainly be called the Alligator Bird. His great size, expert swimming powers, and long beak lined with rows of sharp teeth must have made him a terror to fishes that swam in Late Mesozoic seas.

MEDICINE

Zinc Peroxide Treatment Aids in Cancer Cases

SUCCESS in treating painful, foul-smelling, infected ulcers or sores in 35 cancer patients whose condition was so bad they had been given up as hopeless is reported by Dr. Bromley S. Freeman, of the Tumor Clinic at the Veterans Administration Facility, Hines, Ill. (*Journal, American Medical Association*, July 20).

The ulcers or sores had followed X-ray or radium treatment for cancer which in some cases had persisted. Persistence of the cancer after the radium or X-ray treatment was in some cases hidden by the infection in the ulcers. After the zinc peroxide treatment cleaned up the ulcers, it was possible to give more irradiation for the cancerous condition and in some of the cases reported the patients have advanced to the stage where plastic operations can be done to restore bone and other tissue destroyed by the first treatments.

The zinc peroxide treatments relieved pain to the extent that most of the patients could get along with only mild sedatives instead of the morphine or other narcotics they had previously required. The foul odor from these sores, so bad that patients in the next ward complained about it, grew definitely less, in all but one case, starting within 24

hours after the first application of the zinc peroxide.

"Freedom from embarrassment and the return to normal social contacts and interests together with newly acquired confidence and hope have been noted uniformly," Dr. Freeman states in his report of the patients' condition after the treatment. He is now using the zinc peroxide prophylactically to prevent or lessen the frequency or degree of bone destruction following irradiation.

The treatment is for cancers, or sores following their irradiation treatment, occurring on the surface of the body. Among cases reported were those where the ulcers were on the jaw, throat, or mouth. It consists in using the zinc peroxide for dressings on the sores and as a mouth wash in some cases of lip and mouth cancers.

Zinc peroxide is effective in the treatment apparently because when suspended in distilled water it sets free oxygen which destroys certain germs, among them the kinds Dr. Freeman found most frequently in the sores of the advanced cancer patients. He states that after disappointing results with other products, he is using only the special medicinal brand of zinc peroxide.

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