

## GENERAL SCIENCE

## Science Publications Asked For Interned Researchers

**E**VEN as Britain prepares to fight for her very life against invading enemies, she also undertakes to make life less burdensome for alien scientists who have been sent to internment camps by supplying them with the mental provender they need to keep abreast of developments in their various fields.

An appeal for recent scientific books and periodicals is published by W. A. Wooster, general secretary of the Association of Scientific Workers (*Nature*, July 20). Publications thus obtained are to be turned over to the interned scientists, many of whom, it is pointed out, are sincere anti-Fascists who have been rounded up in the British government's take-no-chances policy.

In his appeal, Mr. Wooster says:

"We are not able to judge the wisdom or value of this indiscriminating internment, but there is one way by which we can lighten the misfortunes of our fellow scientists and mitigate any feeling of bitterness which might arise. This is by supplying them with the books and periodicals which will enable them to keep abreast of new developments in science and play their part efficiently in the reconstruction of the post-War world.

"Those in internment camps are only allowed to receive new books and publications direct from the publishing offices, and individuals could arrange for books to be bought and sent to scientists in the camps. Newly published books and periodicals can also be sent to the camp libraries, and learned societies might consider sending copies of their journals to these libraries through the Y.M.C.A.

"Such action would be a valuable demonstration of that international spirit of science on which all true scientists set so much store for the future of humanity."

*Science News Letter, August 10, 1940*

## MEDICINE

## Dye in Nylon Hose Blamed for Eruption

**A**N ITCHING, spreading skin eruption, taking weeks to cure, has already followed the wearing of Nylon hose in four cases, Dr. S. J. Fanburg, Newark, N. J., reports (*Journal, American Medical Association*, Aug. 3). It was not the Nylon yarn but the dye or finish used in making the stockings that caused the eruption, it appears from Dr. Fanburg's studies.

All four of the young women who got the skin trouble had been wearing the same brand of hose. As most women know, Nylon yarn is made by the du Pont Company, but the stockings from this yarn are made by various hosiery manufacturers. Dr. Fanburg does not state in his medical report which brand caused the trouble in his patients.

Dyes in hosiery and other articles of wearing apparel have caused skin trouble long before the days of Nylon hose. In many of the cases, the persons afflicted were apparently hypersensitive to the particular dye which did not cause trouble in other persons.

*Science News Letter, August 10, 1940*

## MEDICINE

## Pickled Cartilage Used to Fill Skull Depressions

**P**ICKLED cadaver cartilage is now being used to restore lost beauty, or at least to restore the normal contours of face and skull. Success in using grafts of this gruesome material to fill depressions of the skull is reported by Dr. Lyndon A. Peer, of Newark, N. J. (*Journal, American Medical Association*, Aug. 3). The skull depressions followed such ailments as brain abscess or meningitis or fracture of the frontal bones.

The cartilage from human corpses is pickled in alcohol to preserve it. It is then soaked in salt solution for one hour and inserted in a skin pocket in the abdomen. If the patient stands this all right, the graft is removed and inserted beneath the forehead skin to fill out the skull depression.

Fresh cartilage from the patient's own chest is the most satisfactory substance for these grafts, Dr. Peer declares. In some cases, however, the patient will not allow his own ribs to be used, or he may not be in condition to stand such an operation. For these, and for children, the pickled cadaver cartilage is useful. It resists infection surprisingly well.

Pickled cadaver cartilage was extensively used a generation ago to fill depressions in the nose, but unsatisfactory results put it in the discard. When Dr. Peer decided to revive the method, he experimented with human "guinea pigs." Pickled cadaver cartilage was buried under their chest skin for from one week to two years, removed and examined at varying periods. These experiments showed that the material could be used but was not as satisfactory as fresh cartilage.

*Science News Letter, August 10, 1940*

# IN SCIEN

## MEDICINE

## Doctors Urged Not to Fear Giving Sulfanilamide

**D**OCTORS need not be afraid to give sulfanilamide or related chemical remedies, if they can see their patients at least once a day. This encouragement is given by Drs. Perrin H. Long, James W. Haviland, Lydia B. Edwards and Eleanor A. Bliss, of the Johns Hopkins Hospital and Medical School (*Journal, American Medical Association*, Aug. 3).

Reports of patients getting sick, having drug fever, jaundice, kidney and blood disturbances and other bad effects from these new chemical remedies have made many physicians hesitate to use the drugs.

Laboratory tests should be made whenever possible on patients getting these drugs, the Baltimore doctors advise. All the bad effects that may come during the first two weeks of taking these drugs, however, with the exception of acute leukopenia, can be detected by the doctor in daily careful examination of the patient.

Doctors are warned before giving these drugs to learn whether the patient has had a bad reaction to them previously, because in that case a second course of the treatment may cause earlier and more severe reaction.

*Science News Letter, August 10, 1940*

## ENGINEERING

## Portable Substations Travel on Trailers

**T**EMPORARY electrical service may be obtained with the aid of a new line of portable substations, mounted on trailers. There are two types. One has a self-cooled transformer, and requires no attention, while the other uses forced cooling. Both are General Electric Company products.

In use, the trailer, weighing perhaps 20,000 pounds, is towed to the point where service is needed, and connected to the high voltage power line. The transformers step this down to voltages required for use. The new transformer setups should prove especially useful in connection with troop cantonments.

*Science News Letter, August 10, 1940*

# CE FIELDS

## ZOOLOGY

### Canada's Reindeer Herds Increasing, Count Shows

WITH 1,700 reindeer born this year, Canada's reindeer herds in the western Arctic now total about 6,600 animals. When five years ago reindeer reached Canada's western Arctic after an overland trip lasting five years from the west coast of Alaska, there were 2,370 animals in the herd which had made the trying trip. Since then the herds in the Mackenzie River district have increased to the present total.

The reindeer were imported into Canada to provide a new Eskimo industry, because the caribou on which the Eskimos had counted largely for food had been driven away with the onward march of civilization to the north. Eskimos have been trained as reindeer herders, and this autumn the second herd will be given to an Eskimo to look after. This will be a herd of 800 animals which will be driven 250 miles overland from the main reindeer herd to the Horton River district.

The first herd, given to a graduate Eskimo herder nearly two years ago, has increased from 950 to 1,600 head. The agreement under which herds are given to Eskimos is that the natives must eventually return to the Canadian government as many animals as they were given to start with, the increase being their property. In this way the natives are taught to keep their herds in good condition to allow for maximum increase. The herds are to provide food and clothing for western Canadian Eskimos, taking the place of cattle herds of the farm regions to the south.

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## INDUSTRY

### U. S. Machine Tool Needs Pinch Japan's Industries

JAPAN'S manufactures of arms and ammunition, tanks and trucks for warfare on land, planes for air attacks, and ships for sea fighting, may presently feel the pinch of a U. S. embargo that is not really an embargo. Due to the urgent necessity for certain kinds of tools

in our own speeded-up defense program, export in these vital production necessities is being sharply curtailed, Miriam S. Farley reports (*Far Eastern Survey*, July 17).

There is no question here of a discriminatory embargo aimed specifically at the Japanese. The tools are needed in America, and they are not to be shipped out of the country to any foreign nation. Theoretically, this should hit everybody alike, but it does happen that Japan is apparently less nearly self-sufficient than any of the European industrial nations. About 42% of the island empire's total machinery came from the United States in 1936, the last "normal" pre-war year. The rest came mainly from Germany and Britain. With Europe out of production except for the warring nations' own needs, Japan is left heavily dependent on the United States as the only major overseas source of machinery, just at the time when American needs are greatest in connection with our own defense program.

While Japan has been striving desperately to increase its own machine tool production, indications are that the country's capacity to produce has not yet come anywhere near the needs for domestic and Manchukuan consumption. There are reports of industrial undertakings, even those of great strategic importance, being held up for lack of essential machinery.

"If imports from America are severely restricted, either by an embargo, or by higher prices, the effect on Japan's war effort in China or elsewhere will probably not be fatal," Miss Farley states, "but her program for replenishment of armaments and industrial expansion on the continent of Asia will be seriously hampered."

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## PHYSICS

### New Eye Testing Device Makes Use of 36 Lenses

A NEW eye testing device developed by the American Optical Company contains 36 lenses, yet these can be manipulated by oculists to obtain more than sixty billion different prescriptions for glasses.

It contains a battery of test lenses; by manipulating dials and knobs, a great number of combinations can quickly be placed before the eyes. A self-contained mechanism automatically adds the individual lens powers and indicates the total correction.

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## PHYSIOLOGY

### Headlights Bother You? Shutting One Eye Helps

DOES the glare of a strong headlight bother you when you are driving or walking along a very dark road?

Here is a way to prevent it, discovered in England's blackout. Shut one eye when the bright light approaches and open it again when the car has passed. The eye you closed will then be as sensitive as before.

*Science News Letter, August 10, 1940*

## ASTRONOMY

### Amateur Astronomers Will Go to Brazil for Eclipse

A GROUP of about fifteen amateur astronomers, members of the Amateur Astronomers Association, which has headquarters at the Hayden Planetarium in New York, will travel to Brazil to observe the total eclipse of the sun on October 1. This was announced by Charles A. Federer, Jr., secretary of the Association and editor of the magazine *Sky*, who will lead the party.

Color motion pictures of the eclipse itself, and also of terrestrial color changes, are among the chief items in the expedition's elaborate program. Still pictures, in black and white and in color, of the sun's prominences and the corona, the latter best seen at eclipse time, will also be made. By spectroscopic apparatus the sun's atmosphere will be studied. Also an effort will be made to take long exposure photographs of the curious "shadow bands," which sometimes flicker across the ground before and after an eclipse. This will employ a stroboscopic camera, with a rotating shutter to stop the motion.

According to Mr. Federer, the expedition will make observations from Campina Grande, at an altitude of 2,000 feet on the Borborema Plateau, and about 80 miles northwest of the city of Recife (formerly Pernambuco). Since the region is known for its long droughts, and September and October are excessively dry, there seems to be slight possibility of clouds interfering.

Mr. Federer says that amateurs from other societies and their friends are invited to join the expedition and to participate in the program. George V. Plachy, chairman of the Association's Committee on Special Events, is in charge of the detailed plans.

*Science News Letter, August 10, 1940*