

**OUT WITH THE BRINE**—Heat distills sea water making it pure enough to drink. The compression distillator, made by the Arthur D. Little Company, Cambridge, Mass., allows the reuse of the original heat, thus cutting down fuel costs.

or separating impulses to be created immediately.

The waste water, after entering the tank, is deflected downward to the sloping bottom by an inlet baffle. Stretching crosswise in the bottom of the tank are a series of small low "dams." Engineers call them riffles. Solid matter in the water settles behind these riffles. Oil and grease float to the top of the water, and from there are drained off.

#### Score of Separators in Use

More than a score of Gale Separators are now in use. One installation is in a railway terminal yard where Diesel locomotives of several railroad companies are serviced. The water used in washing the Diesels accumulates much oil, grease and dirt. The separator not only salvages the vast quantities of water necessary in the washing process but also salvages grease and oil for re-use, and keeps these undesirable contaminants out of the city sewage.

#### Used in Laundries

The separator is also in use in commercial laundries, a type of activity that ordinarily wastes great amounts of water. One installation is for a laundry on shipboard. A different type of application is in a factory of a great copper and brass company. There it is used to recover for use over and over again the water which cools the rolls that turn out copper sheets. This water in the cooling process accumulates oil, grease and dirt. After passing through the separator it is as good as fresh water straight from water mains.

Science News Letter, April 8, 1950

#### ASTRONOMY

## Asteroid As Yardstick

➤ THE new heavenly asteroid just discovered to have been within 5,400,000 miles of the earth in March promises to provide a new and more accurate yardstick for distances in the solar system.

The chances are that it may replace the famous asteroid Eros as the body which will be used to scale the distances of the sun and the planets. The new asteroid, discovered at the University of California and called 1950DA, approaches to almost one-third of the distance of Eros' closest approach.

For the next six months the new asteroid and the earth will run along together in the heavens like one airplane behind another, giving astronomers ample opportunity to observe it and determine its orbit with great precision.

Dr. Leland E. Cunningham of the University of California computed the orbit of the extremely faint object discovered by Dr. C. A. Wirtanen last month. It is believed to be about a half-mile in actual diameter. It swings about the sun in an elongated orbit approximately every two years, stay-

ing in sight long enough to have its path accurately determined. By triangulation astronomers can determine the distances of other parts of the solar system with greater accuracy once the new asteroid is precisely located, it was explained at Harvard College Observatory in Cambridge, Mass.

Four or five other asteroids of this kind have been found in the past half century. In 1912 Albert came close, but has never been seen since. In 1932 Apollo and Amor both came close, but Apollo's orbit is poorly determined and only Amor has a reliable orbit. Amor was seen again in 1940, and at its nearest can be about 10,000,000 miles from the earth.

For comparison, the nearest approach of well-known asteroid Eros is about 14,000,000 miles, planet Venus 26,000,000, and Mars 35,000,000. Other asteroids have come closer, such as Hermes, which in October, 1937, shot clear across the sky in nine days. At that time, Hermes was scarcely three times the moon's distance away, but so few observations could be gotten of Hermes that we know little about its future course.

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#### MEDICINE

## Wall-Eyed Conditions from Living at High Altitude

➤ A PERSON living at high altitudes is likely to become wall-eyed. Or he may suffer the opposite condition of crossed eyes.

More than half, 60%, of Peruvians who had lived for more than six months at altitudes of 10,000 feet and higher had the wall-eyed condition, Dr. Jorge Valdeavellano of Lima, Peru, found. Besides this 60% who had difficulty turning their eyes inward enough to converge on a near object, another 12% had crossed eyes which turned inward too much.

An inadequate supply of oxygen at the higher altitude is probably the cause, Dr. Valdeavellano said in his report to the Pan-American Conference on Prevention of Blindness, Miami Beach, Fla.

Science News Letter, April 8, 1950

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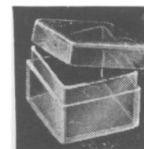
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