

for the armed forces on cold weather operations. Now he is convinced that if the "cold" war becomes "hot" it still will remain cold, in the weather sense.

Men can live comfortably in the Arctic, even at the North Pole, if they are sufficiently well trained and supplied. Col. Balchen points to the fighting last winter in Northern Korea. If the men had been trained in cold weather fighting, he believes, things might have gone better for them.

**Adrift on Ice Floes**

Looking toward the possibility of military operations in the Arctic in the event of another war, Col. Balchen has set men adrift on ice floes. Last spring a party of soldiers spent a short time on a floe, but they had to be evacuated.

It was not a lack of proper equipment, because Col. Balchen believes with his mentor, Fridtjof Nansen, that first necessity for life in the Arctic is good equipment and plenty of it. No, the men had simply picked the wrong kind of floe. But they are learning how to choose livable ice floes.

A recent discovery of the men of the 375th, on their flights to the Pole, may help considerably in the problem of living on the Arctic Ocean. They discovered, last year, three huge floating "islands." The largest was 25 miles wide, and, it was estimated, they are up to 200 feet thick.

If many of them exist, here are solid bases for landing strips, for camps and for scientific observations.

The islands, unlike the floes, are thought to be formed from ice built up on the shores of Arctic islands and broken off by a combination of wind and tide. Many more than the three already discovered might exist, Air Force officers believe. They were never seen before because observers did not know what to look for.

While the possibilities of these islands are being further investigated, Col. Balchen wants to experiment with living on the smaller, more dangerous ice floes.

**Seek Approval for Camps**

To test rescue equipment, clothing and food, and the endurance of man, he wants to set up nine camps, spaced out in the Beaufort Sea and the ocean along the 145th parallel from Alaska—right up to the North Pole.

This project is not yet approved by higher authorities, but Col. Balchen hopes it will be.

The men camped on the North Pole may even attempt to duplicate the feat of the four Russians in 1937. Col. Balchen believes that their observations of currents ought to be checked. Besides he believes that his men can do much more. The Russians had terrible equipment, he says.

With nine camps, evenly spaced out—at the start—a systematic check could be made on Arctic Ocean currents. There is still controversy over the flow of waters

in the ocean. Already, Col. Balchen has observed a current which flows in a big circle around the Beaufort Sea, just north of Alaska, with the part nearest the coast going eastward.

But Col. Balchen is not satisfied. Sitting at a desk in the Pentagon, he is eager to be back in his beloved North. He calls himself a one-man Chamber of Commerce for the Arctic. And he will not count his time wasted in the military maze if he can sell the idea that more of our soldiers and airmen need Arctic training.

Science News Letter, June 2, 1951

**PUBLIC HEALTH**

**Lead Poisoning Is Summertime Hazard**

➤ FOR SOME unknown reason lead poisoning among children occurs during mid-summer and warm weather, the Baltimore City Health Department points out. Five suggestions for protecting children from this hazard are given as follows:

1. Prevent your child from chewing painted objects. Most cases of lead poisoning in children occur between 18 months and three years of age. This is the time when children are teething and like to bite and chew. Watch such children carefully and do not let them chew painted surfaces (especially repainted woodwork) such as window sills, cribs, high chairs or other furniture, or toys. Inspect these surfaces for tooth marks to see if your child has chewed them. Give the child safe objects to chew, such as clean teething rings or hard rubber toys.

2. Prevent your child from eating dried paint flakes. Paint may crack and flake from old heavily coated surfaces. Children are known to pick up these flakes from the sill or the floor and eat them. Remove old paint from window sills before repainting with lead-free paint.

3. Use only paint which does not contain lead for repainting indoor surfaces, furniture or toys. Whenever you paint indoors read the label on the paint can carefully and be sure the paint does not contain lead. Do not buy paint for indoor use unless it is free from lead. If you are a tenant and the owner of the home is starting to paint indoors, be sure he uses lead-free paint.

4. If you use lead paint for outdoor painting and have some left over, do not use the remaining paint for work inside the house.

5. If your child has eaten paint containing lead, he may begin to show the signs of lead poisoning. If you see the following signs in your child, take him to the family physician at once for an examination and explain what has happened: Pains in the stomach, frequent nausea or vomiting, persistent constipation, irritability, frequent headache or convulsions.

Science News Letter, June 2, 1951

**INVENTION**

**Patent Machine to Pick Up Stones from Plowed Soil**

➤ THE BACK-BREAKING job of picking up stones on gravelly soil after plowing can now be done by a machine drawn by a farm tractor but operated by its own power. Stones are picked up by an inclined grating with teeth to dig into the earth on its forward edge. Pick-up is assisted by a toothed rotating cylinder. Stones are carried upward along the incline to be dumped into a truck. Inventor is Alois Louis Cintula, Norwood, Mo., awarded patent 2,553,240.

Science News Letter, June 2, 1951

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