



**WHISTLING PORPOISES**—Taken in the Gulf of Mexico, this photograph shows three of the dolphins whose whistles were clearly heard aboard the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution's *Atlantis*. The same type of dolphins were silent when spotted and listened to off the Florida Coast.

## MARINE BIOLOGY

## Purpose to Porpoise Grunt?

Does porpoise talk to others of its kind when whistling or grunting, or just make noises? Tape recordings may give answer.

➤ WHEN A porpoise whistles or grunts, is he talking to another porpoise, or is he just making noises? William E. Schevill, research associate at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Woods Hole, Mass., hopes to answer that question through means of high fidelity tape recordings of porpoise noises recently made off the coast of Florida.

Mr. Schevill actually played back to the porpoises, or dolphins, some of the recordings he had made, but how their recorded voices affected them, he is not yet prepared to say.

He knows enough about their voices to know that they range much higher in frequency than do sounds the human ear can hear. Before he can be sure that he will be playing back to the porpoises all that they hear naturally, he must secure equipment that can play such high frequency recordings.

Once that is done, he hopes to be able to solve a problem which has been puzzling scientists since it was known that porpoises

"speak." That is—do they have anything to say?

Mr. Schevill has made copies of previous recordings of porpoise voices and sent them to museums. However, these recordings are not wide enough in frequency range.

His present work is sponsored jointly by the Office of Naval Research and the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution.

Science News Letter, July 14, 1951

## INVENTION

## Enlarged Stem of Floor Lamp Conceals Radio

➤ FLOOR LAMP for the home has an enlarged stem, or upright, within which is a radio receiver and loudspeaker. Both are completely concealed except for the controls. The upright is designed and finished to harmonize with the household furniture. Patent 2,559,045 was awarded to Louis Leon Lucien Petel, Levallois Perret, France, for this invention.

Science News Letter, July 14, 1951

## MEDICINE

## Expert Confident Polio Cure by Drugs Possible

➤ "THE RIGHT drug will come along eventually" for polio, Dr. Thomas Francis, Jr., of the University of Michigan School of Public Health predicts in a report to the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis in New York.

The reason sulfa drugs, penicillin and other antibiotics, so effective in many infectious diseases, do not work in polio and other virus diseases is found in the fundamental differences between bacteria and viruses.

Bacteria, Dr. Francis pointed out, are self-sufficient organisms compared to viruses. They live outside the cell and can use food from many sources. The viruses establish themselves inside the cells of the body. They utilize chemicals essential to the life of the cell itself. As a result, the cell may be injured beyond repair. In the case of polio, the infected nerve cells that die are not replaced, and the function of the muscles they supply is lost.

Polio, according to the best evidence now, is basically an infection of the alimentary, or food, tract. The virus, Dr. Francis said, gains entry to nerve cells along the nerves from the throat or intestines.

"If this is correct," he stated, "the danger of paralysis could be eliminated by drugs that would prevent the establishment or multiplication of the virus in the alimentary tract before it extended to the nerves. Such a drug, if successful, also would eliminate the further spread of the virus to other persons through infected excreta."

Science News Letter, July 14, 1951

## INVENTION

## Patent Improved Type of Waxed Wrapping Paper

➤ WAXED WRAPPING paper of better quality is promised with a wax composition and method of making it that brought patent 2,559,398 to Robert G. Capell, Pittsburgh, Pa. Rights are assigned to Gulf Research and Development Company of the same city.

The feature of this composition is high tensile strength which prevents it from cracking and breaking when the wrapper on which it is used is roughly handled, crumpled and bent.

This composition contains bentonite, a type of clay found in many parts of the United States. It uses a bentonite-organic base compound with any of the solid or semi-solid waxes. Especially valuable results are obtained when a petroleum wax is used. The resulting product with petroleum wax has not only higher tensile strength but lower penetration and a higher melting point than the original wax.

Science News Letter, July 14, 1951