

PHYSICS

Suggest Name "Aeropause" For Upper Atmosphere

➤ ON YOUR first trip to the moon, in order to get from the earth's atmosphere to free space, you may go through a region named the "aeropause," if two scientists have their way.

The scientists, who are intimately connected with research directed toward space travel, would call the region between about 12½ miles and 125 miles up, the "aeropause" to get rid of the present confusion about what to call this area. They are Drs. Konrad J. K. Buettner and Heinz Haber of the department of engineering at the University of California at Los Angeles.

They point out that there is little agreement about just where the "upper atmosphere" begins and ends among the various kinds of scientists concerned about research in this region.

They define the aeropause as that region of the atmosphere where its various functions and uses for men and craft begin to cease and space-equivalent conditions are gradually approached. Such a term as "aeropause," they claim in *SCIENCE* (June 13), would be quite useful in modern aviation. It circumscribes the area characterized by certain factors of environment that are distinctly different from those found either in the area of conventional aviation or in outer space.

Science News Letter, June 21, 1952

INVENTION

Garage to Park Cars Automatically Patented

➤ A GARAGE which parks automobiles automatically has been invented by Herman J. Bargehr, Chicago. He received patent number 2,598,750.

In this garage cars are transferred to their parking areas on transfer cars which can move the automobile laterally as well as forward and backward. This makes unnecessary the use of wide aisles for backing and turning the vehicles.

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HOUSES OF EARTH

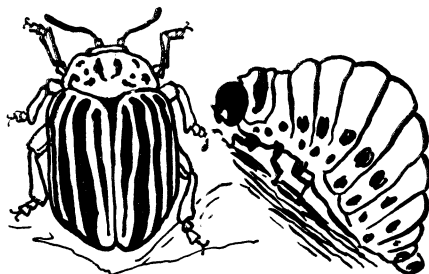
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Feeding the Enemy

➤ INSECTS, it is often asserted and seldom denied, may eventually become one of the inheritors of the earth, by literally eating man out of house and home.

There is no doubt that they are formidable, feeding as they do on everything man produces and uses, from his crops and timber to his clothes and even himself, and serving as carriers of disease as a final lethal fillip.

One aspect of the situation, however, is rather frequently overlooked: Most of the really bad insect pests were set up in business by man himself. Under natural conditions, a potential crop plant and its potential devourer are often separated by thou-

sands of miles; it is far-traveling civilized man who brings them together.

He also makes things all the easier for the pest by massing its chosen food plant in huge fields, and by devoting whole regions to the intensified production of one crop, like corn in the Midwest or cotton in the South.

As a typical instance, take a look at the striped potato beetle. It used to be a relatively insignificant insect, chewing the foliage of a few weed species related to the potato somewhere in the Southwest or in northern Mexico. When large-scale potato cultivation reached Colorado it got its real start. It traveled eastward from field to field and finally reached Europe as a stowaway in shipped potatoes.

The chinch bug, scourge of Midwestern grain fields in dry seasons, offers another case in point. It has always existed where it is now found, feeding undestructively on native grasses, but not until white men began planting hundred-acre grain fields, edge to edge, did it multiply into devastating hordes that sometimes destroy those fields in a single day.

Of course, man does not always bring the crop to the insect. Probably the more usual experience is for him to bring the insect to the crop. The very names of some of our most troublesome insects are monuments to this unhappy fact: Japanese beetles, Hessian fly, European corn-borer, Mexican bean beetle, Argentine ant, Oriental fruit moth—the list is a long one.

Whether man can exterminate the insects is still uncertain. But one thing is sure: if the insects succeed in exterminating man they will have destroyed their best provider.

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HOME ECONOMICS

Age Tags Useless

➤ MARKING CHILDREN'S clothing with size tags by age is useless.

This is the opinion of a majority of 2,266 typical mothers interviewed by the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Three-fourths of the mothers in the United States with children 12 years old or younger buy most of their children's clothes ready-made. More than half of these said that they cannot tell how large a child the garment would fit by reading the size on the label.

Sizes, the mothers suggest, should be given in terms of the height and weight of the child the garment would fit. They also feel that it would be useful if manufacturers would get together and agree on what size garment should carry what label.

Boys have more trouble than girls in getting proper fit. The ready-made garments of three out of every ten boys need altering.

Mothers do read the labels on their children's clothes. Nine out of ten look for the size tag; those who do not, say it is

because they are not reliable anyway. Nearly as many look for cleaning instructions and indication regarding shrinkage and fiber content.

Cotton is preferred for practically all children's garments from baby diapers to boys' school pants. Only for snowsuits and winter crib blankets is wool the best liked fiber.

Disposable diapers are not very popular with American mothers, the survey revealed. Only two out of ten have ever put them on their infants; one out of ten had never heard of them. A few thought they might be useful when traveling, but many seem to object to buying anything which is used only once and then thrown away.

In contrast, practically all mothers in rural sections and three-fourths of those in the city have heard of those gaily printed feed sacks for making garments. More than half had used them for their own children—generally for little girls' dresses.

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