

Books of the Week

For the editorial information of our readers, books received for review since last week's issue are listed. For convenient purchase of any U. S. book in print, send a remittance to cover retail price (postage will be paid) to Book Department, Science Service, 1719 N Street, N. W., Washington 6, D. C. Request free publications direct from publisher, not from Science Service.

AIR ENTRAINED CONCRETE: Properties of Air Voids and Service Record of Pavements—Curtis Warren and L. E. Andrews—*National Academy of Sciences—National Research Council*, Highway Research Board Bulletin 70, 23 p., illus., paper, 45 cents. Small air bubbles distributed throughout the concrete used in highways increase its ability to withstand freezing and thawing, and prevent scaling.

ATOMIC WEAPONS IN LAND COMBAT—Col. G. C. Reinhardt and Lt. Col. W. R. Kintner—*Military Service Pub. Co.*, 182 p., illus., \$3.95. To meet the need of the American to "understand, respect, but not fear weapons his own country developed for its defense."

ATOMS AND ENERGY—H. S. W. Massey—*British Book Centre*, 173 p., illus., \$3.50. The scientific basis for the development of modern atomic weapons, as well as the production of power from atomic energy. The author also evaluates present-day research on the relations between matter and energy.

BACTERIAL GENETICS—Werner Braun—*Saunders*, 238 p., illus., \$6.50. Devoted to a new science with real "hybrid vigor." Especially for bacteriology students who wish to learn of the more important genetics findings that concern them.

BLAZER THE BEAR—Robert V. Masters and Fred Reinfeld—*Sterling*, 60 p., illus., \$2.00. This story of forest fires for children emphasizes the work of the Forest Rangers and "smoke jumpers."

CEILING UNLIMITED: The Story of American Aviation From Kitty Hawk to Supersonics—Lloyd Morris and Kendall Smith—*Macmillan*, 417 p., illus., \$6.50. A wealth of photographs illustrates this readable book celebrating the 50th anniversary of powered flight.

CLIMATE, VEGETATION AND MAN—Leonard Hadlow—*Philosophical Library*, 288 p., illus., \$4.75. The author, writing in Manchester, England, sees Britain as "the Fortunate Isles," with "people, never knowing what to expect from the ever-changing weather, kept mentally alert."

DEFENSE AND THE DOLLAR: Federal Credit and Monetary Policies—Albert G. Hart—*Twentieth Century Fund*, 203 p., \$2.00. Discussing the technical, but highly important, subject of the use of monetary and credit policies in the prevention and control of inflation.

ECONOMIC CONTROLS AND DEFENSE—Donald H. Wallace—*Twentieth Century Fund*, 260 p., \$2.00. It is generally acknowledged that controls are necessary in times of extreme crisis. The question here considered is how serious must be the crisis to require such measures.

LABORATORY INSTRUMENTS: Their Design and Application—A. Elliott and J. Home Dickson—*Chemical Publishing Co.*, 414 p., illus., \$7.50. For the research worker or teacher who needs to have instruments constructed especially to meet his own needs.

OVERCOMING BACK TROUBLE—Helen Jeanne Thompson—*Prentice-Hall*, 214 p., illus., \$3.95. Describing the structure of the spine and the various things that can go wrong with it. Instructions for a series of exercises that the author believes will prevent or relieve back pain are also presented.

SQUARING THE CIRCLE AND OTHER MONOGRAPHS—E. W. Hobson, H. P. Hudson, A. N.

Singh and A. B. Kempe—*Chelsea Publishing Co.*, 51 p., illus., \$3.25. Here are discussed some of the problems that have puzzled mathematicians since remote antiquity.

WHO'S AFRAID OF THUNDER?: The Story of the Weather—Howard E. Sandman—*Sterling*, 61 p., illus., \$2.00. Children will learn about clouds, rain, lightning and thunder as they read about a visit to an airport weather station. Ages 7 to 10.

Science News Letter, September 5, 1953

INVENTION

Talking Dictionary Translates Languages

► A "TALKING dictionary" has been invented which pronounces words audibly for the user and which also can be rigged to translate written foreign languages into audible English.

It uses a group of flexible acetate belts with grooves cut in them. The grooves record the proper pronunciation of words which the user hears through a loudspeaker.

Printed words appearing under windows on the face of the device permit the user to select the word he wants pronounced. Then a pickup is lowered into the proper groove and the word comes through the loudspeaker.

Inventor Leslie L. Erdos of New York says his talking dictionary is particularly useful in the study of foreign languages. Furthermore, he points out, the dictionary can be fixed so that foreign words can be selected in the windows, but that their meanings are given in English or in another language. The talking dictionary received patent No. 2,650,097.

Science News Letter, September 5, 1953

PHILOLOGY

Language Disproves Theory of Kon-Tiki

► LANGUAGE DISPROVES that the Polynesians came from America as the Kon-Tiki voyage westward across the Pacific led Thor Heyerdahl to contend.

Evidence for this is communicated by Prof. Alan S. C. Ross of the University of Birmingham, England, to *Nature* (Aug. 22).

No relationship exists between Polynesian and any American language-family, Prof. Ross observes. But philologists do find that Polynesian is related to Indonesian. There are written texts in old Javanese, which is an Indonesian language, of at least the eighth century A.D., and Primitive Indonesian was spoken earlier.

Thus language ancestral to Polynesian existed before Mr. Heyerdahl's supposed two waves of "Polynesians" coming from America, one about 500 A.D. from Peru and another about 1000 A.D. from northwest North America.

Comparative philology affords "an absolutely decisive disproof" of the Kon-Tiki theory in Prof. Ross' opinion.

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