



**LABOR-SAVING DOLLIES**—Rushing to complete the laying of two four-mile sections of 20-inch pipe along the bottom of Mackinac Strait before the winter freeze, contractors saved more than 100 miles of land clearing and ditching by crossing the 240-foot deep shipping channel with this submarine pipeline. The tires were used on pipe-launching devices that put pipe in the water at the rate of almost 1,000 feet per hour.

## ENTOMOLOGY

## Ice Tomb for Insects

► GRASSHOPPER GLACIER, a massive ice tomb for ancient grasshoppers 11,000 feet above sea level in the Beartooth Mountain range in Park County, Mont., is serving scientists as a great "natural" museum. It also doubles as a frozen-food storehouse for birds and fishes.

Scientists recently have found that great swarms of grasshoppers are still plunging down to icy deaths in the Montana glacier, Dr. Ashley B. Gurney, U. S. Department of Agriculture entomologist, reported to the Smithsonian Institution. As the ice eventually releases the insects, local birds and fish eagerly feed on the remains.

Although at one time some authorities thought the bottom layers of the glaciated grasshoppers were several thousand years old, tests just completed on a small sample of these grasshoppers indicate they might be 600 years old, although 300 years or less seems more probable. These tests, conducted by Dr. W. F. Libby of the Institute of Nuclear Studies, University of Chicago, were made by the radiocarbon dating method, using the radioactive carbon-14 content of the insects' bodies.

The grasshoppers arrive at the glacier by air after a journey of perhaps several hun-

dred miles. However, the reason the grasshoppers land on the ice is a puzzle to scientists.

The most plausible explanation is that there is a sudden weather change as the swarm of insects passes over the glacier. Grasshoppers like to fly only when the air is warm. Swiftly dropping temperatures or sudden cloudiness often make them fold their wings and land. Even though they may be flying high above the cold air over the ice, they would feel the chilliness and act accordingly.

Within the glacier itself, only one grasshopper species has so far been identified. Called *Melanoplus mexicanus mexicanus*, it was well known in the 1870's and 1880's as a widespread migratory insect pest. Other migratory species of grasshoppers have been found in fresh condition soon after landing on the surface ice and snow of the glacier.

Further study of Grasshopper Glacier should supply more of the basic facts related to the history of modern North American glaciers as well as the movement of insect pests by air currents, Dr. Gurney states.

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## MEDICINE

## Aspirin Beats Antibiotics In Treating Colds, 'Flu

► AS MEDICINE for influenza and 'flu-like colds, aspirin rates better on a time and cost basis than the antibiotics, or so-called mold remedies, it appears from a report to the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (Sept. 26).

The report covers a study during an outbreak of influenza A-prime last winter at Chanute Air Force Base, Ill., by Capt. Philip N. Jones, Maj. Roy S. Bigham Jr. and Lieut. Phil R. Manning. Dr. Jones has been discharged from military service since the study was made and is now at St. Luke's Hospital, Chicago.

Neither aspirin nor the antibiotics used, terramycin and erythromycin, actually cured the influenza or 'flu-like colds. The Army doctors think most of the 150 patients had influenza but since tests were not made on all of them, they just call it an influenza-like condition.

Patients getting aspirin had normal temperatures, on the average, in 30 hours, while those getting terramycin had normal temperatures in 41 hours, and those getting erythromycin in 42 hours. Normal temperature was used as a sign of recovery since it could be measured and since patients felt entirely well when the temperature was back to normal.

While 11 or 12 hours difference in recovering from an attack of 'flu or a feverish cold is not great, the doctors point out that the quicker recoveries came with a much cheaper medicine. An aspirin tablet costs about one cent, while a capsule of terramycin sells at retail for about 35 cents and a tablet of erythromycin costs 32 cents.

Whether the antibiotics prevented development of secondary bacterial infection could not be told from the study. None of the patients, regardless of what medicine they got, developed any such complication.

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## MEDICINE

## 1954 Will See Big Polio Vaccine Trials

► MASS PRODUCTION of a trial vaccine against polio and the "staging of the largest validity test (of the vaccine's worth) involving human beings in the history of the world" has been set for next year, 1954.

Basil O'Connor, president of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis in New York, so states in a letter to editors asking for cooperation in the 1954 March of Dimes fund-raising campaign.

The sum of \$7,500,000 will be needed in 1954 alone for the vaccine production and trials, Mr. O'Connor says. In addition, \$19,000,000 will be invested in gamma globulin which, "at least through next summer, will remain our only stopgap holding action against paralytic polio."

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