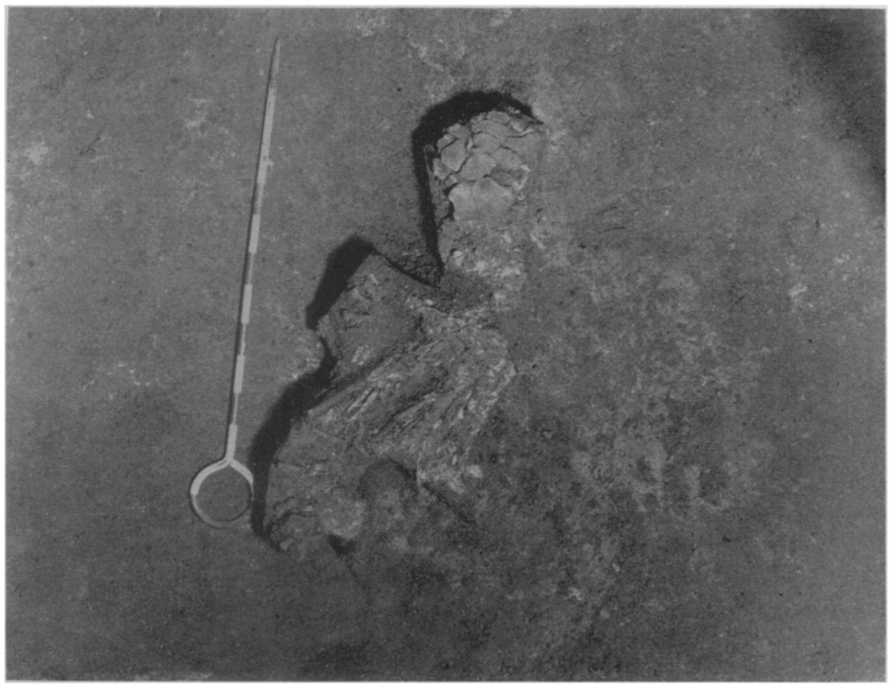

STONE AGE BABY—This photograph shows the crushed skull of a Stone Age baby that has been unearthed from one of the oldest continuously inhabited homes in the world. A magnifying glass will reveal one of the baby's teeth.

ARCHAEOLOGY

Ancient Cave Home

See Front Cover

➤ ON VIEW at the National Academy of Sciences meeting in Washington was the portrait of a Stone Age baby who lived some 70,000 years ago in a cave in what is now Iraq.

People are still living in the cave today, making it one of the oldest continuously inhabited homes in the world.

The portrait could not be called a good likeness. It is a picture of the little skeleton as it was found last summer by a Smithsonian Institution scientist, Dr. Ralph Solecki, who has just returned.

Bones of the baby were badly crushed, but they showed the child was about nine months old. It had been buried with bent arms and drawn up legs so that the skeleton measured about 14 inches in length. There is no doubt, Dr. Solecki said, that the baby is as old as the geological layer in which it was found.

Other photographs show the cave home in which the tiny skeleton was found. A shaft dug under Dr. Solecki's direction to a depth of 44 feet below the floor of the cave showed that this cave is one of the oldest continuously occupied homes in the world. People live in the cave today. People lived there certainly 70,000, possibly 150,000 years ago. And the cave, the view from the front entrance of which is shown on the cover of this week's SCIENCE NEWS LETTER, has been occupied continuously in the meantime. Original inhabitants were probably Neanderthal people.

It is a pleasant place to live. The mouth of the cave faces south with a view of mountains and bright sunlight. It is protected from cold winds which blow from the north. When the sun is low, as in winter, it lights about half of the interior. The cave is near water and lies near traveled routes from the Zagros Mountains to the Fertile Crescent land below.

Science News Letter, May 15, 1954

TECHNOLOGY

Plastic Bodies For Automobiles

➤ PLASTIC BODIES for automobiles are now an experimental production novelty. However, members of the American Society of Tool Engineers meeting in Philadelphia were told by Wm. A. Hermonet of U. S. Rubber Co. that they will not be playing in the automotive "sandlot league" very long. The claim is "higher quality and longer life." The first commercial plastic auto body, the Alembic I made in California in 1952, has been duplicated from the original mold 800 times. Plastic bodies have proved themselves under the desert sun and in snow.

Science News Letter, May 15, 1954

PHYSICS

Baby Atom Smasher From Surplus Radars

➤ HIGHLIGHTS FROM reports to the American Physical Society meeting in Washington:

A baby atom smasher, particularly useful for students, can be built partly with war surplus radars. Dr. H. F. Kaiser of the Naval Research Laboratory, Washington, calls it the microtron.

A new cloud chamber uses doubly distilled water expanded at pressures one-third those of present equipment to track the "curious" particles known as mesons, the stuff making up atomic hearts. Dr. C. E. Nielsen and associates, Ohio State University, developed the equipment, and now are testing it with gases other than water vapor.

Two new determinations of the speed of light, a constant basic to science, confirmed its velocity as very close to 299,793 kilometers per second. As one method, Dr. E. K. Plyler of the National Bureau of Standards used the atomic clock, governed by exceedingly small and constant vibrations of molecules. For the other, E. F. Florman, also of the Bureau, used radio waves clocked on a dry lake bed in southeastern Arizona.

The sun has been tagged as guilty of bombarding the earth with less than one percent of cosmic rays. It may throw more cosmic rays than this at us, but pinning even this small amount on the sun, as University of Chicago scientists have done, shows that other stars as well can generate cosmic rays.

Science News Letter, May 15, 1954

BACTERIOLOGY

Better Vaccines From Anti-Enzyme Chemical

➤ BETTER VACCINES against whooping cough and influenza and, perhaps, against polio, tetanus and diphtheria seem to be coming through the help of an anti-enzyme chemical.

Results of tests showing this were reported by Drs. Jack Moss, J. M. Beiler and G. J. Martin of the National Drug Company research laboratories, Philadelphia, at the meeting of the Society of American Bacteriologists in Pittsburgh.

The anti-enzyme chemical is phosphorylated hesperidin. It checks the action of the enzyme, hyaluronidase, which acts as a spreading agent. By checking the spreading agent, the hesperidin chemical seems to slow up absorption of the vaccine antigen.

This, according to recent theory, should make the vaccine's protection greater and longer lasting. The hesperidin chemical is the latest in a series of chemicals that have been tested for this effect. Such chemicals have been called adjuvants. Mineral oil is one of them.

Science News Letter, May 15, 1954