

SOCIOLOGY

Spend Summer in Slums

Thirty U. S. and foreign students are living in Philadelphia slums to get first-hand knowledge about job and living problems of unskilled workers.

➤ THIRTY U. S. and foreign students are voluntarily living and working in one of the most crowded areas of Philadelphia this summer. Their reason is to learn about the problems of slum people by direct experience.

Students from Japan, India, California and Georgia went to Philadelphia without jobs so they could experience the difficulties of unskilled workers trying to find factory or other manual jobs. One of the girls, a recent college graduate, went to 83 firms before she got a job folding cardboard cartons.

An Indian boy of the Brahman caste (highest social group) had the greatest trouble in job-seeking. For people of his caste in India, looking for a job is on a level with begging in the streets. He could not bring himself to apply for work until a counselor accompanied him.

As "Interns in Industry," the students live in a tenement-like "home" supplied by the Friends Service Committee, sponsor of the project.

The students found that their "home" was little different from its row-house neigh-

bors in the downtown area, one of the most densely populated urban areas in the United States.

The houses there have no yards or porches. The students, as the people around them, must seek to escape the heat of the house by sitting on the three concrete steps that lead from the doorway to the street pavement.

Dr. John L. McKenney, faculty member of the University of Arkansas, and his wife are counselor and chaperone for the group.

"Many of these kids plan to go into religious or social work," Dr. McKenney told SCIENCE SERVICE. In Philadelphia they will gain an insight into the problems of lowest income people that they could have gained in no other way."

The students buy and cook their own food, sleep on rows of canvas Army cots, and clean and repair their temporary home.

The inter-racial, inter-religious group will not have all work and no play, however. Although the students will stick to a slim budget, they plan to have picnics and weekend trips to nearby beaches and parks.

Science News Letter, July 9, 1955

GENERAL SCIENCE

Lack Foreign Science Info

➤ THE UNITED States is failing to gather enough scientific information about other countries, a Hoover Commission Task Force charged.

In a report to Congress, the Task Force pointed out that "our Government and its intelligence forces are not fully exploiting the possibilities of valuable military and technological data potentially available in scientific reports and technological publications issued in foreign countries."

Charging the State Department, which now has the job of gathering scientific data, with inadequate collection facilities and an inadequate number of staff experts to treat the material properly, the study group recommended that the job be taken away from the State Department and turned over to the Central Intelligence Agency.

The Task Force, headed by Gen. Mark Clark, further recommended that CIA be given the authority to appoint "such scientific attaches as may be necessary to carry on this work abroad." This is believed to mean that scientists and other technical experts be employed in evaluating scientific reports made by other nations.

The recommendation that the "responsibility for procurement of foreign publica-

tions and for collection of scientific intelligence" be given to CIA comes at a time when conflicting reports and underestimations of foreign technological abilities such as in aircraft design and production have become a major topic of public debate.

Science News Letter, July 9, 1955

PUBLIC HEALTH

Two Out of Three Now Have Health Insurance

➤ VOLUNTARY HEALTH insurance now protects nearly two out of every three men, women and children in the United States, the Health Insurance Council announced in New York. The figures are from its ninth annual survey of health insurance in America, as of Dec. 31, 1954.

By July 1, some 104,000,000 persons no longer had to worry about the hospital bill because they had voluntary health insurance against hospital expenses.

About 89,000,000 were protected by that same date against the surgeon's bill in case of operations, and 50,000,000 had regular medical expenses protection.

Science News Letter, July 9, 1955

• RADIO

Saturday, July 16, 1955, 5:00-5:15 p.m. EDT

"Adventures in Science" with Watson Davis, director of Science Service, over CBS Radio Network. Check your local CBS station.

Dr. George Gerard, assistant director of the research division of the College of Engineering, New York University, will discuss "Faster and Hotter Flying."

PHYSICS

Russians Develop Image Converter

➤ RUSSIAN SCIENTISTS appear to have developed a better system for recording and magnifying faint light flashes than any now used in the United States.

If their image tube, evidently a super-sensitive TV set, works as claimed, it would have many uses in industry as well as in astronomy and physics. Physicists in this country cannot decide definitely about the merits of the method, since the Russians' report in the *Proceedings of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R.* (Jan.-Feb.) is incomplete.

It states that a sensitive, electron-optical image-converter is being used, but does not give any details of the electronic equipment. Without these details, scientists can only puzzle as to how the Russians can obtain with a fast motion picture camera in about a thousand-billionth of a second pictures of the faint flashes of light given off in solid crystals. This is at least 100 times faster than the best U. S. electronic circuits now do.

Such a system as the Russians claim to have is being tried at laboratories in the U. S., but none is in common use.

Russian scientists reporting the new method were E. K. Zavoisky, G. E. Smolkin, A. G. Plakhov and M. M. Butslav.

Science News Letter, July 9, 1955

TECHNOLOGY

Filters Protect From "Nerve Gas" Insecticide

➤ THREE NEW filter materials for gas masks and respirators have been found effective against the insecticide demeton, an offspring of the nerve gases developed under Hitler, and formerly too dangerous for widespread farm use.

Agencies of the Government are probably testing the filters for possible protection against gases that might be used against U. S. troops in the future.

The new filters are the first to offer farmers complete protection against all commonly used insecticides, chemists and entomologists who tested the materials at the Department of Agriculture reported.

The filter materials are a special grade of fine-fiber asbestos, a fine-fiber wood pulp, and glass wool impregnated with a special resin. All three are now available commercially.

Science News Letter, July 9, 1955