

MEDICINE

Get Drunk From Beer?

A Yale psychologist says it is impossible to drink enough beer to get drunk, but many imbibers testify to the contrary in this not-so-sober semantic sally.

► "INTOXICATION" FROM beer is impossible, a Yale University psychologist claims. Nonsense, reply beer drinkers who have been "drunk," and a battle of definition is developing over just what is "an intoxicating beverage."

The cork to the controversy was pulled by Dr. Leon A. Greenberg, associate professor of applied psychology at Yale. He said that a person cannot drink enough low-alcohol content beer to become "intoxicated," scientifically.

On the other hand, Dr. Albion Roy King, professor of philosophy at Cornell College, Mt. Vernon, Iowa, said that persons unfamiliar with Dr. Greenberg's "precise mathematical definition of intoxication," can become "tight or . . . drunk" on beer.

A drinker is not intoxicated until his blood shows an alcohol concentration of at least 0.15% and he exhibits abnormal mental and physical actions, Dr. Greenberg believes. He said time is a factor in drinking because the body dissipates the alcohol. He also pointed out that liquid capacity of the human stomach is from one and one-half to two quarts.

Applying this information to distilled spirits containing from 40% to 50% of alcohol, fortified wine with 20%, light wine with 10%, and 3.7% beer, Dr. Greenberg concluded that the first three are intoxicating beverages but that, by his definition, beer is non-intoxicating.

Citing controlled experiments with drinkers, Dr. Greenberg said that a person who drinks ten ounces of whisky in two hours becomes drunk, scientifically. Drinking one and one-third to one and two-thirds quarts of wine in from two to four hours also produces drunkenness. Three quarts of beer would have to be imbibed within two to three hours to have the same effect on a drinker's actions and blood. Consuming three quarts of beer would make most people ill, not drunk, Dr. Greenberg charged.

"The alcohol content of this beverage," he said, "is so low, and the quantity required to produce intoxication so large, that it may properly be considered a non-intoxicating beverage."

In one experiment, attempts were made to force beer consumption of six bottles per hour for three and one-half hours, totalling almost eight quarts. The drinkers, Dr. Greenberg reported, almost all got sick; only a few became intoxicated, scientifically.

The comments of four specialists on Dr. Greenberg's definition of intoxicating beverages were also included in the *Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol* (June).

One of the experts, Dr. King, said "in

popular usage, word meanings are determined not so much by their factual reference as by their emotional connotation." He charged that Dr. Greenberg merely stated what people already know, "that it takes more drinking to get tight on beer than on whisky."

Dr. King, who is the author of the book, "Basic Information on Alcohol," said persuading drinkers that beer is non-intoxicating and at the same time showing that any way of getting drunk is undesirable might have some social value.

"If a genuine hiatus between beer drinkers and whisky drinkers, between brewers and distillers, should come in this country, it might advance the cause of temperance," Dr. King stated.

Dr. Harry M. Tiebout of Greenwich, Conn., a psychiatrist and vice-chairman of the Connecticut Commission on Alcoholism, said, "in the eyes of most beer drinkers such a conclusion (Dr. Greenberg's) is simple nonsense, and those with whom I have spoken say so unanimously. They may know nothing about their blood level or the percentage of alcohol content of the beer they drink, and they care less. What they do know is that they get drunk on beer, using their definition."

Science News Letter, July 16, 1955

INVENTION

Automatic Parking System Wins Patent

► A CONVEYOR system for lifting cars to and from the upper levels of a fully automatic parking garage earned a patent for William Zeckendorf, president of Webb & Knapp, Inc., of New York and Alexander H. McPhee, a consulting engineer of Plandome Heights, N. Y.

The car-lift invention marks the culmination in a series of inventions designed to create fully automatic, multistoried garages for mid-town use. Although the New York building firm is not now constructing the automatic garages, "sooner or later we will get involved in them," Webb and Knapp's chief architect, Ieoh Ming Pei, said.

In operation, a car owner drives his vehicle onto a "receiving station platform," where the car is secured to a dolly. The conveyor then takes the car to an upper level, where it is hoisted above other parked cars on the level and set down in a free space.

The vertical conveyor was awarded patent No. 2,704,609. Patent rights were assigned to Webb & Knapp.

Science News Letter, July 16, 1955

GENERAL SCIENCE

State Department Finds Spy in the Ointment

► THE STATE Department finds itself with a spy in the ointment. Officials in Washington fear that a Hoover Commission intelligence study may aid the Communists and permanently injure the work of U. S. science attaches abroad. (See SNL, July 9, p. 22.)

The Commission recommended that gathering scientific intelligence be taken away from the State Department and given to the Central Intelligence Agency, charging that the State Department was failing to do the job. It also recommended that CIA be given authority to appoint scientific attaches for such work.

No Intention to Spy

It was learned that officials of the State Department are both puzzled and angered at the charges and recommendations. It has never been the intention of the Department's science attaches to engage in spy work, it is contended.

What is particularly irksome to the science staff of the State Department is that a similar charge calling the science attaches spies was made once before, by the French Communists.

In 1950, a study of science and foreign relations was made for the State Department by a group headed by Dr. Lloyd V. Berkner. In their study, the Berkner group recommended the establishment of science attaches in U. S. embassies abroad to help the international flow of scientific and technological information. The Berkner report strongly emphasized that science attaches "should concern themselves only with unclassified and legitimately available classified information."

French Reds Sling Mud

The French Communists jumped on the report and in a brochure addressed to the Western European scientists, the Communists warned them not to be hoodwinked. They said that the U. S. science attaches were really spies.

The State Department did not reply to the attack because it was unfounded. It is pointed out that the job of the science attaches is no different than that of any other foreign service officer. They advise, report and represent, but do not act as cloak-and-dagger men.

What State Department officials now fear is that the Hoover Commission report will lend support to the spy charge made by the Communists. At present, there are four science attaches working abroad. They are stationed at the U. S. embassies in London, Paris, Tokyo and Stockholm.

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Condors are master flyers, sometimes soaring to 15,000 feet along the western ridges of the Andes Mountains where many make their home.