

METEOROLOGY

Searching for Hurricanes

➤ HURRICANE HUNTING PLANES should do more searching of upper air levels farther than 200 miles from the storm and less flying in the relatively calm "eye" of the storm.

Dr. Herbert Riehl, University of Chicago meteorologist, charges that information gained by aircraft staying in or near a hurricane's center for long periods to report its hourly position is of "severely limited" value to the forecaster who is "expected to advise about tomorrow's storm threats."

Regular observations are "scarce or missing" over the ocean areas where hurricanes are generated and spend most of their lives, he said. Therefore, Dr. Riehl urges hurricane hunters to take paths at about 15,000 feet that will not only check position of the storm's "eye," but take weather soundings over adjacent areas from which there would otherwise be little or no data.

Although he says it would be best to have several aircraft to conduct both center and far-away surveys, combined missions

are necessary because of economy and lack of aircraft. Dr. Riehl points out that flights "can often be arranged so as to do reasonable justice to both objectives."

He outlines flight routes for two 1954 hurricanes, covering about 2,300 miles, or about six and a half hours in a DC-7 airplane. High airspeed, he says, is necessary if the flights are to be useful for 24-hour predictions.

After flying by an indirect route at 18,000 feet until near the hurricane, Dr. Riehl says that aircraft can then go up or down "to any desired altitude without detracting from the value of the flight for forecasting purposes."

When asked for comments on Dr. Riehl's suggestions, which appear in *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society* (June), a Weather Bureau official said the bureau was giving "serious consideration" to all proposals for improving prediction of hurricane paths. Dr. Riehl is a well-known expert on tropical meteorology.

Science News Letter, September 3, 1955

BIOCHEMISTRY

Keeping Drunks Sober

➤ AN ANTI-TENSION drug that also helps keep alcoholics sober after withdrawal is soon to go on the market.

It will be available only on a physician's prescription, however.

The drug is called Equanil by its manufacturers, Wyeth Laboratories, Philadelphia. It is a derivative of propanediol, a chemical related to some antifreezes.

It relieves tension and anxiety by direct action on the central nervous system, and takes effect within 45 minutes after being given. No side effects, except slight drowsiness that wears off after three or four days' use of the drug, have been noted.

It is reported to be non-habit-forming. Patients who have taken it do not develop a tolerance for it. Long-time users have not needed bigger doses to gain the effect. On the contrary, they have been able to cut down the dosage.

Most patients in the test series have stopped taking the drug without difficulty and, usually, on their own volition.

Although not effective in severe mental ailments, the drug has been reported to bring "virtual complete recovery from mild neuroses."

Of 27 patients who reported severe tension headaches at the base of the skull, combined with complaints of tight feelings, taut muscles and restless nights, 23 recovered or improved to such an extent that the problem was of no more concern.

Patients with menstrual stress stated that while taking the drug the stress diminished

markedly until they were symptom free and discharged. Psychosomatic pain associated with stomach distress, a frequent and often painful manifestation of tension, was relieved in the majority of 23 patients who were treated with Equanil.

Physicians have reported that they have been able to produce restful sleep without dreams or nightmares in every case treated, with the exception of those in a psychotic state. When Equanil has been used as a substitute for drugs that cause patients to dream, the dreams have disappeared.

Science News Letter, September 3, 1955

PUBLIC SAFETY

Install Traffic Signal For Blind Pedestrians

➤ A TRAFFIC SIGNAL for blind pedestrians has been installed in Louisville, Ky.

The signal, on the roadway separating the Kentucky School for the Blind and the Workshop for the Blind, is the regulation kind except for an added buzzer attachment. Pedestrians can halt traffic by pushing control buttons on poles at the intersection.

As the traffic light changes to red, the buzzer sounds for five seconds, a sign to the blind that they may proceed. Traffic is halted for another ten seconds after the buzzer stops. Estimated cost of the installation is \$350.

Science News Letter, September 3, 1955

AGRICULTURE

Fall Spinach Hybrid Resistant to Diseases

➤ TOUGH NEWS for children is seen in the U. S. Department of Agriculture's development of a new hybrid spinach that is just right for fall planting and that resists blue-mold and blight disease.

The new spinach, called Early Hybrid 7, is for fall crops, yielding 13.5 to 19.6 tons per acre. Seeds will be available in limited quantity for commercial planting this year.

A cross between a blue-mold resistant and a blight-resistant spinach variety. Early Hybrid 7 resists both these diseases. The only hope for young spinach-haters seems to be that, under epidemic condition, a few plants may become diseased.

Science News Letter, September 3, 1955

Questions

MARINE BIOLOGY—How do fiddler crabs show neurotic symptoms? p. 153.

GENERAL SCIENCE—What "secrets" were found in Geneva to have been discovered by scientists from many countries? p. 149.

HORTICULTURE—Of what value are rotating light bulbs for growing hothouse plants? p. 151.

PHYSICS—How do heated liquids reveal their temperatures? p. 152.

TECHNOLOGY—What advantages do radars in aircraft have over ground-based instruments? p. 152.

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