

BIOCHEMISTRY

Unstable Chemicals in Cigarette-Cancer Link

► IN SOLVING the problem of whether cigarette smoke causes lung cancer, scientists must consider unstable, "easily excited" chemical compounds of "limited lifetime," Drs. Hermann Druckrey and Dietrich Schmahl point out in reporting experiments at Sloan-Kettering Institute for Cancer Research in New York in *Science* (Sept. 2).

Dr. Schmahl is from the Chirurgischen Universitaetsklinik at Freiburg, Germany.

Fluorescence of solutions of tobacco smoke in benzene or petroleum ether shows, they found, that both stable and unstable compounds exist in the smoke. Unstable compounds account for 90% of the smoke's fluorescence under ultraviolet light.

These unstable compounds may or may not be cancer-causing. Their chemical nature is not known. Because they are unstable, they may break down before the smoke from cigarettes is condensed and they may not all get into the tobacco tars.

Cancer-causing power of smoke condensates and of tobacco tars may, it therefore appears, not give the true picture of the cancer-causing power, or lack of it, in cigarette smoke.

Science News Letter, September 17, 1955

BIOLOGY

Rabbit Chases Snake In Switch of Roles

► IF THINGS like this happen in Missouri often, no wonder it is the "show me" state.

Albert Adams, who superintends the Drury wildlife refuge near Mincy, Mo., was sitting on his porch when he heard a commotion in the bushes nearby. Looking over the rail, he saw a six-foot, sleek black-snake slithering across the yard as fast as it could squirm. Hot in pursuit of the black villain was—a cottontail rabbit.

The rabbit chased the snake out of sight.

What gave a lowly rabbit the courage of a lioness? Mr. Adams discovered a nest of bunnies in the bushes where the fuss had started.

Science News Letter, September 17, 1955

YOUR SKIN AND ITS CARE

By H. T. Behrman, M.D., and O. L. Levin, M.D.

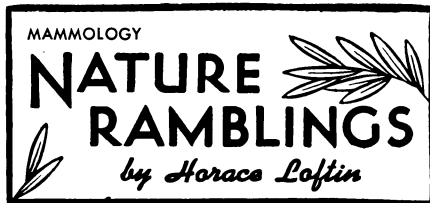
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Mole Meets Atom

► UP TO NOW, the mole has been able to keep his secrets pretty much to himself.

Hidden in his labyrinth of burrows beneath the soil, he has defied the curiosity of scientists who would like to know such things as how far and how much he moves in a day, how long are his tunnels, where he rests and what he considers to be his own private territory.

Only when he was imprudent enough to tunnel near the surface, plowing up a "mole hill," did he offer a clue to his wanderings. About the only thing the inquisitive scientists could do was to dig him up and watch him in a cage, obviously not a very successful way to study the natural habits of the animal.

Now the atomic age has caught up with the mole, robbing him of his cloak of secrecy.

Scientists in England have thought up a simple means of tracking the mole all through his daily business, and without him being the least disturbed or aware of the intrusion, by using a radioactive tag and Geiger counter to follow him underground.

First they catch the mole, digging him up as he moves through a mole hill. The mole is tagged with a fine wire containing radioactive cobalt—not radioactive enough to hurt the animal, but strong enough to cause the counter to click when near it.

One problem they met at first seemed to have the scientists stumped. They did not know where to put the wire. His strong fore legs were too large, and his short, stumpy legs were too small.

Happily, they discovered that his tail was smaller at the base than on the end, and a wire ring put there would stay. So the wire went around the mole's tail.

The mole gets over his fright and indignation about a day after his release. He then starts his normal round of activities, unaware that all the time he is giving away long-guarded secrets of the mole tribe as his wanderings leave a tell-tale track of clicks in a Geiger counter.

Science News Letter, September 17, 1955

SOCIOLOGY

Foreign Travel Makes Executive More American

► FOREIGN TRAVEL makes the American businessman more American. He becomes less a Bostonian, New Yorker, Californian or Texan. And much-traveled businessmen are more likely to become Republicans than untraveled ones.

These conclusions from a study were reported by Ithiel de Sola Pool, Suzanne Keller and Raymond A. Bauer of Massachusetts Institute of Technology at American Sociological Society meeting in Washington.

The men they studied were heads of American corporations having 100 or more employees. They had made five or more trips abroad, at least one having been in the past five years.

The effect of traveling was broadening in that it led the traveling businessman to give up narrow identification with a particular region or segment of the United States.

Travel did not cause much acceptance of foreign ideas, but did lead to greater attention to foreign events and greater consideration of them in weighing policy.

On foreign trade matters, the attitude of the untraveled was dictated by self-interest of the firm. The traveled businessman, regardless of self-interest, was more likely to take the dominant business view.

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