

PUBLIC HEALTH

Yellow Fever in Mexico

Deadly disease will invade Mexico before end of 1956, World Health Organization official predicts. It is now only about 800 miles from the Florida Keys and Brownsville, Tex.

► **YELLOW FEVER** will invade Mexico within the next few months probably, and almost certainly within a year.

This prediction comes from Dr. Fred L. Soper, director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau, regional office of the World Health Organization, with headquarters in Washington.

Yellow fever right now is only 75 or 80 miles from the Mexican-Guatemalan border.

It is only about 800 miles from the Florida Keys and Brownsville, Tex.

News of this close approach of the deadly disease was received in official notification from the Government of Guatemala that dead and dying monkeys are now being found around Lake Izabal and that there is evidence of the presence in that region of the yellow fever virus.

The distances from this region to the coastal city of Puerto Barrios and to British Honduras as well as to Mexico are very short. No apparent natural barrier to movement of yellow fever into these regions exists.

The great danger is that one or more

persons bitten by yellow-fever-carrying mosquitoes might reach a seaport or other city where there are *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes that also carry yellow fever. The short distances and speed of air travel would make it possible for an infected person to reach another country before his yellow fever infection was known.

These aegypti mosquitoes are found all over the whole southern third of the United States, from the southern border of Virginia to Yuma, Ariz., close to the Mexican border.

Mexico right now is engaged in a very active campaign to eradicate the urban yellow-fever-carrying mosquito. So are Cuba, Haiti, Jamaica, Trinidad and the Dominican Republic. Central America has cleaned up its aegypti mosquitoes almost entirely, although Guatemala and El Salvador may still have a few.

The weak spots for aegypti eradication in the Americas now are Mexico and the United States, with the United States farther behind than Mexico.

Because of our aegypti mosquitoes, the Surgeon General of the United States has,

in accordance with international quarantine regulations, declared approximately the entire southern third of our nation a yellow fever "receptive area."

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GENERAL SCIENCE

Sodium Graphite Reactor To Generate Electricity

See Front Cover

► **THE FIRST** non-military atomic energy reactor to produce power for the generation of electricity by a private utility will be the sodium graphite reactor nearing completion by Atomics International, a division of North American Aviation.

The nearly-completed California plant is shown on the cover of this week's SCIENCE NEWS LETTER.

Negotiations have been authorized by the Atomic Energy Commission for Atomics International and the Southern California Edison Company to enter into an agreement for the utility organization to install electrical generating equipment with a capacity of 7,500 electrical kilowatts adjacent to the nuclear plant to utilize the 20,000 kilowatts of heat produced by the reactor. The Sodium Graphite Experiment, SRE, a joint project between Atomics International and the AEC, is part of the Commission's program to develop economical power from nuclear energy.

Science News Letter, February 18, 1956

GEOGRAPHY

Explorers Find New Route to South Pole

► **THREE NEW ZEALAND** explorers have found a new route to the South Pole that Captain Robert Falcon Scott had missed, it was reported in Sydney, Australia.

The men found the route after climbing the Ferrar Glacier in the Antarctic. They were the first men to climb the glacier since Scott's 1911-13 expedition.

The New Zealanders are Trevor Hatherton, Lt. Comdr. J. L. Smith and B. Gunn, serving as observers with the American "Deepfreeze" expedition.

The report of their successful survey was radioed to Sir Edmund Hillary who will lead next year's New Zealand Antarctic Expedition. Sir Edmund is now in the Antarctic with the British Commonwealth expedition at Vahsel Bay, Weddell Sea.

After climbing the glacier, Hatherton, Smith and Gunn reached the peak of Beehive Mountain, 7,700 feet, named by Scott. They then began placing supply dumps for Dr. Vivian E. Fuchs' expedition, which plans to cross the Antarctic continent by land in 1957-58.

After mapping the upper reaches of the glacier and the nearby plateau, the New Zealanders discovered their route to the South Pole and a new mountain range never before seen.

Science News Letter, February 18, 1956



AMERICAS' HEALTH PROMOTER—Since 1920 Dr. Fred L. Soper has been actively fighting disease in the Americas. As director of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau, regional office of the World Health Organization in Washington, he now heads the fight for health in the Western Hemisphere.