



FLYING SAUCERS—These tiny aluminum discs were spun at 12,000 revolutions per minute in various corrosive solutions to provide data on how an aluminum automotive radiator would stand up in various coolants. They are held by Dr. Summer B. Twiss, left, and William E. Drinkard of Chrysler Corporation engineering division.

BIOCHEMISTRY

Fighting Drug Needed

➤ A GOOD FIGHTING DRUG, instead of tranquilizers and "happy pills" and anxiety relievers, may be what this country needs.

This idea, which could revolutionize drug treatment for the mentally sick and the neurotics, was suggested in discussions at a conference on evaluation of pharmacotherapy in mental illness. The conference was sponsored by the American Psychiatric Association, the National Academy of Sciences, National Research Council and the National Institute of Mental Health.

Look for a drug which restores an animal's ability to fight back, it was suggested. Such a drug might be more useful than tranquilizers and euphorants now given to make patients quiet and cooperative and to lift their depressed moods.

Instead of looking for more tranquilizers and euphorants, medical science was asked to look also for something that will help a mentally sick person discriminate between what once was terrifying and that which need not be now the patient is grown up and in a different situation than when he was a child frightened because he could not understand.

Such a drug should help the patient learn to enjoy going to sleep to rest instead of dreading it because of nightmares or looking to it for escape.

Since drugs are "screened" on laboratory animals to test their effects, one that enabled an animal to change its fixation at

an immature stage of development might help a schizophrenic patient change his.

The drug that has an effect on only one patient out of 15 should be studied further instead of being discarded as useless. This very drug, even if it seemed at first to be a dud, could perhaps provide a mine of information about mental illness and new ideas for drugs.

Science News Letter, October 6, 1956

HEMATOLOGY

Cobra and Bee Venom Aid Study of Bleeder Disease

➤ FROM COBRA and bee venom is coming more knowledge of a bleeding disease known as Christmas disease.

The new findings were reported by Dr. J. R. O'Brien of Portsmouth, Eng., at the International Society of Hematology meeting in Boston.

When these venoms are added to blood plasma, they destroy a factor present in normal blood serum but not in serum of patients with Christmas disease. From this Dr. O'Brien concludes they destroy the Christmas factor.

Christmas factor has a high avidity for phospholipoid chemicals. Bee and cobra venoms contain such chemicals. This suggests that Christmas factor has a phospholipoid chemical combined with its protein.

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TECHNOLOGY

Transatlantic Phone Link Opened to Public Service

➤ THE FIRST UNDERWATER TELEPHONE link to span any ocean was opened to public service when officials of American, British and Canadian communications companies vocalized their greetings across 2,250 miles of deep sea.

Culminating two years of construction at a cost of \$42,000,000, the twin cables, 20 miles apart on the Atlantic sea bottom, are capable of carrying 36 conversations at one time.

The cables used average an over-all diameter of one and one-quarter inches. They were laid in three segments by the cable-ship *Monarch*, the largest such vessel afloat. It took seven months to complete the laying operations.

Two cables were needed because the design of each cable permits transmission in only one direction.

The deep-sea segment of the system extends 2,250 miles from Clarenville, Newfoundland, to Oban, Scotland. From Oban, new trunk lines link the system to switchboards in London. On this continent, land and water sections bring the transoceanic circuits to Portland, Me., and to Montreal.

The American Telephone and Telegraph Company, British Post Office and Canadian Overseas Telecommunication Corporation are partners in the cable system.

Science News Letter, October 6, 1956

AGRICULTURE

Agriculture Yearbook Deals With Animal Ills

➤ THE 1956 YEARBOOK of Agriculture (see p. 220) is a medical encyclopedia for animal owners.

The Yearbook, which since 1936 has been devoted to a single subject annually, deals solely with animal diseases this year. It includes 134 chapters by leading scientists on nearly every aspect of disease in domestic creatures.

Animals emphasized include dogs, cats, cattle, swine, sheep, goats, poultry, horses, mules, rabbits, minks and even foxes.

The book tells how to recognize, treat and prevent animal diseases. It tells which diseases can be transmitted to people and describes similarities between animal illnesses and human ailments.

The contributors, mostly U. S. Department of Agriculture and state college scientists, take a variety of specialized approaches to the disease problem. Chapters are devoted to sulfa drugs, antibiotics, protection against transmissible diseases and parasites, food supplies and animal diseases, causes of disease, and genetics and disease.

Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson, in his foreword to the book, urges students of veterinary and biological sciences to take more highly specialized training in their fields.

Science News Letter, October 6, 1956