

India's valuable monazite deposits were discovered unexpectedly about 50 years ago by a chemist in a warehouse in Germany. In the early years of this century, coir, or rope, spinners were carrying on a lively trade with Europe, especially Germany. As coir spinners sat on the Travancore beach to twist their cocoanut-husk rope, heavy wet sand grains became entwined. Much of this sand fell off on the voyage, but some stuck long enough to reach the coir store-rooms of Germany. In 1909 a German chemist chanced to analyze the yellow-green sands and found high quantities of monazite.

From then on, the beaches of Travancore were sifted, agitated, separated and exported without restriction until 1947 when a small group of scientists approached the president of the Indian Science Congress and convinced him to halt the foreign development of India's valuable minerals.

That president was Jawaharlal Nehru, and today the industry is under control of the Government of India, performing an important part in India's declaration of economic independence.

Science News Letter, November 10, 1956

CHEMISTRY

Safe Substitute for Carbon Tetrachloride

➤ A SAFE SUBSTITUTE as a cleaning fluid for dangerous carbon tetrachloride exists in a little known solvent material, methyl chloroform.

It is much less likely to injure the user in almost every application where hand cleaning is done at room temperature, a committee of the American Industrial Hygiene Association in Detroit reported.

General ventilation is considered enough for brief exposures or those from use of very small quantities of the solvent. High temperatures or prolonged exposures will require process ventilation.

Recommended maximum atmospheric concentration (eight hours) for methyl chloroform is 500 parts of vapor per million parts of air (ppm) by volume, while that for carbon tetrachloride is 25 ppm, the industrial hygienists state.

A comparison of the two solvents shows their great similarity for cleaning purposes.

Science News Letter, November 10, 1956

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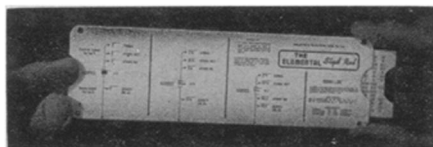
TECHNOLOGY

Photographic Lamp Safe In Dangerous Mines

➤ FOR UNDERGROUND PHOTOGRAPHERS in mines, even if they are gassy and likely to explode, there is a new floodlight that can be used for still and motion pictures without danger. The 1,000-watt unit, perfected by the Bureau of Mines Central Experiment Station in Pittsburgh, weighs only 25 pounds and looks like a movie studio lamp.

Science News Letter, November 10, 1956

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 —VICTOR W. KILLICK, In Charge of Astronomical Observatory, Sacramento Junior College, Calif.

MANY YEARS EXPERIENCE
 . . . I have had many years experience in astronomy, and as Junior Leader here in Atlanta I always recommend Dynascope.
 —LEONARD B. ABBEY, Jr., Decatur, Ga.

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