

GENERAL SCIENCE

War Problem Serious

➤ WAR is the most serious of civilization's immediate problems, the retiring president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Dr. G. W. Beadle, California Institute of Technology, said.

Logically, a war of nuclear weapons is unthinkable and there is now "no alternative to peace," he declared. "However," Dr. Beadle said, "in the present state of armament there can be no guarantee that an illogical lunatic or madman in a position of power will not pull the trigger that will set off a war."

He said, "Aside from the fact that the present maintenance of peace through mutual threat of annihilation is intolerably dangerous, the pyramiding cost of supporting superior military strength and defenses against potential enemies seriously competes with alternative activities that would decrease the probability of war.

"It is no new thought that if the intelligence, imagination, creativity and drive that now go to maintain military might, not to mention the raw materials and energy devoted to the same purpose, were wisely used for peacetime purposes, the incentives to war could be largely abolished.

"In spite of the fact that there is wide agreement with this thesis that war is more nearly than ever synonymous with madness and that decreasing its likelihood is the greatest need of our time, progress is made with discouraging slowness.

"The obvious solution through mutual disarmament fails because there is no mutual trust among nations.

"While the task of preventing a major war in the immediate future is assigned to the statesmen of the world, with special responsibility in the hands of those of the more powerful nations, there are many ways in which science can and must contribute toward basic and long-term solutions.

"It is difficult for men with empty stomachs to know right from wrong. If presently available scientific knowledge of agriculture were applied on a world-wide basis, hunger could become unnecessary. But the economic, political and social prob-

lems inherent in doing so are made enormously more difficult by the fact that they must be solved in terms of a world divided into many nations. Solutions are possible and every possible effort should be devoted to attempts now being made to arrive at them."

Science News Letter, January 12, 1957

EDUCATION

High School Enters Age of Automation

➤ HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS in Buffalo are getting ready for the age of automation by building and programming electronic "brains."

Aaron L. Buchman, mathematics teacher of the Hutchinson Central Technical High School, Buffalo, N. Y., told the Association for Computing Machinery meeting in New York that his course in programming and coding the digital computer was successful in tapping the unused mathematical ability of some of his most gifted students, and generated interest in mathematics and science in the student body.

Science News Letter, January 12, 1957

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