

It was in Iceland that the famous German chemist, Dr. Robert W. Bunsen, whose name is attached to the Bunsen burner familiar in all laboratories, evolved his theory of geyser action, which is still accepted in a modified form. Bunsen visited Iceland and worked out his theory some years before the discovery of the Yellowstone geysers in the early 1870's.

Iceland is always thought of as a Viking colony, but there was a small colony of Irish settlers there when the first Norse settlers came, about 850 A.D. From Iceland went the hardy souls who colonized Greenland under Eric the Red, who in turn was father of Leif the Lucky, first recorded visitor to North American shores, nearly half a millenium before Columbus. Thus in a way the American bluejackets and marines now in Iceland are only making a long-overdue return visit.

There are Icelanders in the United States, but their settlement is much more recent than the short-lived colony which Leif planted on an unknown part of the North American coast. One group of them lives as fishermen on an island in Lake Superior, another as farmers in North Dakota.

The preference of Icelandic settlers in this country for a severe climate is often a subject for remark. As a matter of fact, they live in a harder climate here than their fathers were used to in the "Old Country," for despite its chilly name Iceland's climate is to be described as raw and wet, rather than cold. It lies almost entirely south of the Arctic Circle, and its average temperature is kept higher than might be expected by the Gulf Stream. About one-eighth of the island is covered with glaciers and snowfields. By contrast, Iceland also has some of the world's mightiest volcanoes.

Science News Letter, July 19, 1941

Sheep eat a more varied diet of grasses and weeds than do cattle.



Far Transplanting

WESTERN Hemisphere help is going to war-menaced Iceland in a hitherto unreported form. Thousands of seeds from two species of evergreen trees, gathered high on Colorado mountains, have been sent to Hakon Bjarnason, chief of the Iceland Forestry Service, by Jacob Jauch of the U. S. Forest Service. The story of the sending of the seeds is told in the July issue of the *Journal of Forestry*.

The two tree species represented are corkbark fir and Engelmann spruce. Both are high-altitude trees, well suited for the severe weather conditions that prevail on the upper levels of the Rockies. Mr. Jauch states that he awaits with interest the results of this experiment to see if these trees will thrive in sub-arctic Iceland. Although the island republic lies just south of the Arctic Circle, he points out, the climate along its southern coast is so modified by warm ocean currents that it is actually no more severe than that of New York, and materially milder than the climate of the high Rockies.

Iceland once supported a much better timber growth than it now does, Mr. Bjarnason has written to his friend here.

While the island was directly controlled by Denmark, it was pretty badly exploited and lost most of its trees and a considerable part of its best pasture land. Since Iceland declared its independence, acknowledging only the personal sovereignty of the Danish crown, its affairs have been better managed and efforts are being made to conserve and restore its natural resources.

So hard-pressed are the Iceland herdsmen, however, that constant vigilance has to be exercised to keep them from turning their sheep loose in growths of young birch trees, which the Iceland Forestry Service wants to grow up into usable timber. A good deal of Mr. Bjarnason's work has to do with maintaining fences around his woodlands, and he is kept constantly on the move all summer long, either on ponyback or in a six-year-old American-made car.

Science News Letter, July 19, 1941

MEDICINE

Horse "Sleeping Sickness" Breaks Old Boundaries

THE old geographic boundary of the Appalachian mountains, which was supposed to separate the eastern from the western types of equine encephalomyelitis, popularly called "horse sleeping sickness" and known to have attacked humans as well as horses, has been broken, if it ever existed.

The virus of the eastern type of this horse plague has been discovered in the brain of a horse killed by this disease in the Boca Chica flats of Texas, Raymond Randall and Ervin A. Eichhorn, of the Army Veterinary School, Army Medical Center, Washington, D. C., report. (*Science*, June 20.)

An outbreak suspected of being equine encephalomyelitis killed 60 other horses recently in that same area.

Vaccines for protection against this horse plague exist, but are specific, in that the appropriate vaccine must be given to protect against eastern or western type of the disease. Discovery of the eastern type as far west as Texas is therefore important if protective vaccination is to be effective.

Science News Letter, July 19, 1941

● RADIO

Thursday, July 24, 2:45 p.m., EST

On "Adventures in Science," with Watson Davis, director of Science Service, over Columbia Broadcasting System.

Dr. Homer L. Shantz, of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, will discuss "Forest Holidays."

Listen in each Thursday.

SCIENCE NEWS LETTER SUBSCRIPTION COUPON

To Science News Letter, 2101 Constitution Avenue, Washington, D. C.

Start my subscription to SCIENCE NEWS LETTER for 1 year, \$5
 Renew 2 years, \$7

Name _____

Street Address _____

City and State _____

(No extra postage to anywhere in the world)