



tirely to the earth. But when Venus is full, it is far beyond the sun and its distance makes it faint. In recent months, it has been getting closer, and brighter, to reach a maximum on December 28.

After that date it will get still nearer, and bigger, but the crescent will become so narrow that it will begin to get fainter once more.

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METEOROLOGY—GENERAL SCIENCE

## Weather Scientists Doing Important Defense Work

### Meteorologists Among Instructors in C.A.A. Courses At 1,000 Colleges; Few Who Do Not Give Part Time

**M**ETEOROLOGISTS watch the skies nowadays with first thought for national defense. They have postponed "for duration" many research projects dear to their hearts, and are devoting themselves to the training of field observers for the Army and Navy, and to the instruction of aviators in such parts of their science as will enable them to fly better. These and other contributions of weather scientists were pointed out by Prof. Charles F. Brooks, head of Harvard University's Blue Hill Meteorological Observatory, at a symposium on Scientists and the Emergency held by the American Association of Scientific Workers in Cambridge.

"I should estimate that perhaps a quarter to a half of the time of meteorologists in the United States is now being devoted to defense activities," Prof. Brooks stated. "There are those in the armed forces and civilian instructors in the numerous schools for airplane pilots and navigators who are devoting all their time to the defense effort.

"There are those in the universities and technical schools who are devot-

ing practically all their time to training hundreds of cadet officers to become weather forecasters.

"There are probably 50 or 100 meteorologists among the instructors in the C.A.A. courses at 1,000 institutions of higher learning throughout the country.

"The U. S. Weather Bureau is working on many projects at the behest of the Army or Navy, and its general forecasting service is used directly or indirectly by the people of the United States, including defense workers, while special forecasting in connection with particular defense needs is much in demand.

"There are, indeed, few meteorologists whose time is not being devoted in part to defense."

Deflection of research effort to problems of immediate defense significance is felt most acutely in the fields of pure research. Prof. Brooks pointed out that it is exactly this kind of research that in the end pays the biggest, though often the least foreseen, dividends.

This handicap is partly offset, however, by the intensification of research in certain other applied lines, and in

the increase in facilities which are being made available because the defense program calls for their use. Results thus obtained will not be confined to defense, nor will the benefits gained be discontinued with the cessation of the national emergency, the speaker concluded.

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## Contacts in Mexico Urged

**M**EXICANS, far better disposed toward the United States than they ever were before the advent of the "Good Neighbor" policy, still await more effective implementation of that policy, so far as culture is concerned, and especially so far as science is concerned, declared Prof. Bart J. Bok of Harvard College Observatory, who reported on his visit in Mexico last summer.

If Americans with business or professional contacts in Mexico would only learn to speak Spanish, it would help enormously, Prof. Bok contended.

"Judging from what I heard throughout Mexico," he said, "the success of Vice President Wallace's visit to Mexico City was in no small measure due to his knowledge of Spanish and the delivery of his major address in that language."

Mexicans are keenly interested in science, especially since the spread of literacy through the government's educational program, Prof. Bok observed. He recommended that American educational foundations extend their activities in our neighbor republic, that the present excellent practice of granting scholarships in American universities to students from Mexico be followed through by giving them further aid after their return home, and that Americans do all they can to encourage adult education and science popularization in Mexico.

"The Mexican public wishes to know of modern science," he declared. "One feels that it would be a great thing if Latin America could receive a Spanish edition of our American SCIENCE NEWS LETTER, the news releases from Science Service and translations of our best popular scientific books."

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Colors of the French *tricolor* flag, which appear equally wide, are really in proportion of red — 3, white, — 3;3; blue—3.7; says the Better Vision Institute, explaining that the lens of the eye does not bend light rays of different colors in precisely the same degree, and early flags made of equal colors looked unequal.