



FOLLOWING IN DAD'S FOOTSTEPS—Paul Condon and his brother Joe, sons of Dr. Edward U. Condon, director of the National Bureau of Standards, display their projects at a Washington, D. C., Science Fair.

other pursuit outside science. For these non-professional scientists of tomorrow, the serious fun they have in science clubs is one of the richest experiences of their youth. They will be better equipped to live in a scientific world and control the results of science so that civilization will progress rather than be wiped out.

Science fairs are fun for young scientists who enter—and for their parents and friends and the adult sponsors of the fairs—but they are also an important event in

building intelligent leaders of the future.

Anyone interested in science clubs can get information by writing to Science Service, 1719 N St., N. W., Washington 6, D. C.

Science News Letter, November 13, 1948

MEDICINE

Outbreak of Rash Among Sailors Traced to Moths

➤ A SKIN ERUPTION which attacked about two-thirds of an American merchant marine crew which entered a Venezuelan port was traced to a tropical moth. Three Boston physicians suggest that in any outbreak of rash the moth should be suspected, especially in crew members of ships or airplanes which enter South American ports.

On the first night the American crew anchored in port, a swarm of moths invaded the ship. The sailors killed them by crushing them between their fingers. Shortly afterwards some of the men noticed "small white itching bumps" on their skins and on the following morning their bodies were covered with a rash except for the face, palms and soles of the feet.

Other crew members noted the eruption on arising in the morning. This was traced to the bed linen which had been changed the night before. The closet in which fresh sheets were stored was made of meshed metal which permitted the entrance of the moths, several of which were found on the closet floor and some suffocated between the stacked sheets.

Twenty-nine of the 31 sailors who got the rash were treated at the United States

Marine Hospital in Brighton, Mass., by Drs. William R. Hill, A. Daniel Rubenstein, and Joseph Kovacs, Jr., who present their report in the JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (Nov. 6).

The eruption developed from a few minutes to a few hours after contact with the moth or with moth-stained bed sheets, the physicians state. Removal of the patient from the source of contact, a soap and water bath, a change to clean clothing and application of an alkaline wash usually brought relief. The patients became well in four to seven days.

The moth has been identified as the female of the genus *Hylesia* by V. Nabokov of the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University. These moths belong to the family Saturniidae, sometimes called, in English, peacock or silk moths, according to the report. They are attracted by light which explains their being on board ship, as the vessel had powerful lights.

Science News Letter, November 13, 1948

PLANT PHYSIOLOGY

Radioactive Molybdenum Shows Need of It in Plants

➤ MOLYBDENUM, the steel-maker's "seasoning," is also needed in extremely small amounts by plants—as little as ten parts per billion by fresh weight. To trace these minute quantities into and through plants, Drs. P. R. Stout and W. R. Meagher, University of California plant physiologists, have made use of radioactive molybdenum isotopes, supplied to plants that had been deprived of even the slightest speck of the element.

Molybdenum-starved plants show two outstanding symptoms: they lose the green color in their leaves, and they become unable to make use of nitrates taken up by their roots, piling these necessary salts up in their leaves to as much as 12 times normal concentration.

When molybdenum is supplied in even very low concentration these conditions are corrected in a matter of hours. The healthy green color re-develops in the leaves, and the abnormal concentration of nitrates is reduced to a more usual level.

When the radioactive molybdenum was

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