

GEOLOGY

Soviet Uranium Deposits

Russians have found enough uranium sources to make possible the development of atomic power in the future in Central Asia, scientist here believes.

► RUSSIAN efforts to build an atomic bomb may be concentrated in Central Asia in the Tashkent area. This is indicated in a survey of Soviet uranium deposits just published.

"A fair amount of authentic information" on Soviet uranium resources is available in this country, declares D. B. Shimkin of the Russian Research Center at Harvard University in the journal, *SCIENCE*, (Jan. 21). The Soviets have discovered enough uranium in the past decade to make it possible to develop atomic power in the future in Central Asia, Dr. Shimkin says.

No Soviet uranium deposits are known which are as rich as the two main sources of the element for American atomic work, deposits in Canada and the Belgian Congo. Dr. Shimkin does not discuss the rich Czechoslovakian uranium ore which Russia is believed to be mining behind the iron curtain.

Richest uranium ores known to be inside the USSR are in Central Asia.

"It must be stressed," Dr. Shimkin points out, "that all of the Central Asiatic deposits are found within a radius of 250 miles from the important hydroelectric plants of the Tashkent area. . ." Latest available figures show that water power developments in

this area produced 882,000,000 kilowatt hours of energy in 1943.

"Labor, transportation and climatic conditions are also favorable here," adds Dr. Shimkin.

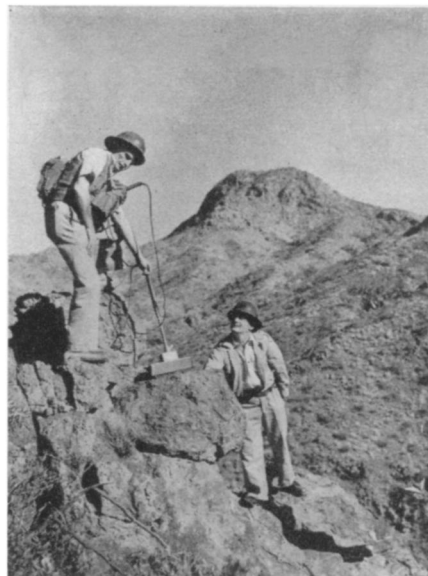
In addition to its relatively advanced industry, the Tashkent area has the advantage to the Russians of being remote from western nations.

The city of Tashkent, with an estimated population of more than half a million, is the capital of the USSR's Uzbek Republic. It is located north of Afghanistan and about 800 miles east of the Caspian Sea. The area was formerly called Turkestan.

Best known of the Central Asia uranium deposits is in the Fergana Valley, south-east of Tashkent. Prospecting for radioactive minerals in this area began in 1900, and expeditions to the region were sponsored by the old Imperial Academy of Sciences before the Russian Revolution.

Although fewer studies are known, two other areas may be termed promising for atomic ore hunting in the USSR, Dr. Shimkin reports. These are the region in Siberia between the Aldan gold fields and Lake Baikal and in western Russia in the Ukraine.

Science News Letter, January 29, 1949



1949 URANIUM PROSPECTORS
—These men are searching for radioactive deposits with a Geiger counter on Australia's Mt. Painter uranium field in the Flinders Ranges.

GEOLOGY

Mythical Serpent's Home May Be New Uranium Source

► THE SEARCH for the atomic bomb element, uranium, is being pressed in the land of Arkaroo, the giant serpent. Mount Painter, in the Australian state of South Australia, is the site of the renewed atomic prospecting.

Four hundred miles north of Adelaide, the mountain is in the remote Flinders Ranges. Nearby in the Gammon Ranges is the mythical home of the serpent, invented by the natives to account for strange rumblings in the earth. Geologists have identified the rumblings as subterranean rock movements. But the scientists have made a discovery much more important than the myth of Arkaroo.

Radioactive ores exist over a 100-square-mile area in the region of Mount Painter. This was first found several decades ago when radium was discovered. A small quantity of radium was obtained, but the radioactive ores of the region were largely neglected until 1944 when the Allies were secretly searching for sources of uranium.

An airstrip and road were built, but other sources of uranium elsewhere in the world were more promising, so development of Mount Painter again lagged near the end of World War II.

Now, a new program of exploration is under way, sponsored by the state government, to determine the quality and extent of the ores. If it is successful, Arkaroo's mythical home may be an important center in an atomic era.

Science News Letter, January 29, 1949

PSYCHOLOGY

U. S. Prosperity Threats

► AMERICA'S two great fears are inflation and communism. That is, if a group of 5,000 city dwellers interviewed by the Psychological Corporation of New York are typical of the rest of us.

Asked what are the threats to a prosperous America, 49.5% listed inflation and 44.1% mentioned communism, Drs. Henry C. Link and Albert D. Freiberg, report to the *JOURNAL OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY* (Feb.).

Strikes and industrial strife are only "also-rans" as a source for worry, being listed by only 12.1%.

Surprisingly enough with communism looming so large as a threat, war talk and the threat of war were mentioned by only 10.6%. The Russians are a cause for uneasiness to only 1.6% and the atomic bomb frightens only 1.8%.

Contrasted with these very low returns are the following threats to a prosperous America: Politicians, political parties, poli-

tics—10.6%; Race prejudice and intolerance—8.8%; bad government, bureaucracy, graft, etc.—7.5%.

That America's city dwellers are not awake to the dangers of floods, drought, and wastefulness of resources is shown by the fact that only 3.5% mentioned these and similar threats as cause for alarm.

With regard to the civil rights issue, 77.6% said they believe that a program to teach white and Negro to get along together would do more good for American Negroes than passing laws to give them equal rights.

At the bottom of the heap of America's worries is the Taft-Hartley Act with only 0.3% considering it a threat to prosperity; 34% of union members consider that it has done more harm than good while 44% of non-union members think it has done more good than harm.

Science News Letter, January 29, 1949