



AEROSOL BOMB—It is cheap and useful for ridding rooms of flies and mosquitoes. It has good immediate effect, but is not intended for residual-type spraying.

as containing benzene hexachloride, insist on having a sniff at it first. There are several species of this compound, designated with letters of the Greek alphabet. Originally, the benzene hexachloride offered on the market was a mixture of all of them; it had a disagreeable smell and was rather more toxic than it should have been for general use by non-professionals.

One of the "ben-hex" brethren, however, has the triple advantage of being nearly odorless, highly poisonous to flies, and not very poisonous to man and his animals. This is gamma benzene hexachloride. If the label on the can or bottle specifies this one particular compound, using all three names, and if it doesn't smell bad when you sniff at it, then it is OK to purchase.

Another new synthetic fly-killer is a synthetic pyrethrum, which was developed by government entomologists only within the past few months. It is not yet on the market, but several chemical firms have expressed their interest in it, and it may be in production in another year or two. It

has the same quick knock-down properties as natural pyrethrum, combined with much better fly-killing power, so it should be another good weapon in man's anti-fly armory when it does become commercially available.

As for the reports that DDT is menacing us as well as the flies with poisoned death, there seems to be little foundation for them. These rumors, however, have been widespread and persistent enough to cause scientists representing several government agencies—the Department of Agriculture, the Public Health Service, the Food and Drug Administration and the medical authorities of the Army and Navy,

together with the Pan American Sanitary Bureau, to go into a serious huddle recently. They came up with a joint statement to the effect that while DDT is a poison and has been recognized as such from the beginning, "There is no evidence that the use of DDT in accordance with the recommendations of the various federal agencies has ever caused human sickness due to the DDT itself," and that while precautionary modifications have been made in the recommendations regarding its use for fly control in dairy barns, "There is no justification for public alarm as to the safety from the standpoint of DDT contamination."

Science News Letter, May 21, 1949

NUCLEAR PHYSICS

New Atom Commissioner

➤ THE NEW scientist-member of the U. S. Atomic Energy Commission is a distinguished expert on the very complex theory of the atom who won undying fame as the author of a hard-to-read best seller.

Prof. Henry D. Smyth has been chairman of the department of physics at Princeton University since 1935. He took part in some of the early (1941) discussions which led to the successful development of the atomic bomb.

After playing an active role in the wartime Manhattan Project, he was assigned by the project's military boss, Maj. Gen. Leslie R. Groves, to write the first history of the atom bomb.

The book, issued shortly after the first brief announcements of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, had a big sale, despite the fact that it violated most of the rules for a best seller. Full title of the volume is A GENERAL ACCOUNT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF METHODS OF USING ATOMIC ENERGY FOR MILITARY PURPOSES UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT, 1940-1945. It was quickly dubbed "The Smyth Report."

In his introduction, Dr. Smyth stated that the book was written for "scientists and engineers generally and . . . other college graduates with a good grounding in physics and chemistry."

Despite this, and the fact that the book begins with Einstein's theoretical contributions to atomic energy, it has rated as a best seller at the Government Printing Office. More than 26,000 copies have been sold by the GPO ((price is now 40 cents, up a nickel since 1945). Other thousands of copies have been sold in editions published by the Princeton University Press.

A science classic, the report has been criticized, chiefly by laymen, as telling too many "secrets" of the bomb.

Dr. Smyth's new superior, Chairman David E. Lilienthal of the Atomic Energy Commission, told a Senate committee two years ago that the report was a breach of

security. Lately, however, Chairman Lilienthal has probably become more sympathetic. His own Commission's fifth semi-annual report has had similar criticism from congressmen.

The newly-named commissioner's own view was stated in the report which said that atomic energy raised political and social questions.

"The people of the country must be informed if they are to discharge their responsibilities wisely," the report concludes.

Before authoring the famed report, Dr. Smyth was a leader in developing the process for separation of the fissionable varieties of uranium from the more common, non-bomb kind. Fifteen years ago, he was one of a team of Princeton scientists who made the significant discovery of a rare isotope of the hydrogen atom.

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WYOMING

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Write for folder—Paton Ranch, Shell, Wyoming.

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