PSYCHOLOGY

Secret Ingredients Lend Value to Product

WHEN AN advertiser on television or radio tells you his product contains—and then identifies the ingredient only by mysterious letters and numbers, he is attempting to endow his product with a value which it really lacks.

The psychological reason for this was explained to the American Psychoanalytic Association in New York by Dr. Alfredo Namnum of Yale University department of student mental hygiene.

This technique of advertising is similar to gossip, he explained. Gossip does not, as it pretends, pass around important secret information. When the gossiper requires the listener to pledge secrecy, she is only trying to create excitement with something which is basically boring and indifferent, Dr. Namnum said.

Secrets are also kept, and especially by governments, in the unconscious belief that secrecy confers power. The powerful often claims exclusive rights to secrecy and tries to dispossess the weak of the secrets which he jealously guards. This inequality is sometimes necessary, Dr. Namnum admitted, but it is often carried unnecessarily too far.

The right to secrecy and privacy is very vital for the individual, he said. When the individual is completely deprived of information (when things that he needs to know are kept secret from him) he does not tolerate it as well as it may appear.

Science News Letter, January 2, 1960

VIROLOGY

Live Virus Polio Vaccine For Hemophiliacs

LIVE VIRUS oral polio vaccine has been delivered to a U. S. Air Force base to prevent any danger of bleeding from inoculations with regular polio vaccine.

Dr. Albert Sabin of the University of Cincinnati received a request for his oral polio vaccine from Capt. John P. Conley of the Air Force hospital at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio.

Dr. Conley requested the vaccine for use among members of two families suffering from hemophilia. A person suffering from hemophilia has a tendency, usually hereditary, to bleed continuously from a slight wound.

Science News Letter, January 2, 1960

ASTRONAUTICS

TV Robots May Build First Space Station

REMOTELY CONTROLLED machines that watch their hand-like parts with television eyes may build the first platforms in space.

Dr. Fred L. Whipple of the Smithsonian Institution's Astrophysical Observatory, Cambridge, Mass., reported to the Office of Naval Research that these machines would work much as remote manipulators now used to handle radioactive materials behind lead shielding in atomic energy laboratories.

The "telepuppet," as he called it, would have a little feedback on handling pressure to give the human operator a feel of the object the machine is working on.

These robots are likely to be the first real workers in space because space suits would be cumbersome and might rip or tear as a man worked. Space suits also would be subject to punctures by small meteors.

"Man is needed in space, presumably, because he can exercise judgment and also because he cannot be jammed by radio countermeasures," Dr. Whipple said. "But he does not have to be out working in a space suit."

Science News Letter, January 2, 1960

ROCKETS AND MISSILES

Army's Solid Missile Fuel Is "Shut Off"

A WAY TO "SHUT OFF" the solid fuel motor of the Army's new Sergeant artillery missile has been developed.

Brakes, in the form of air-drag fins that spring out at just the right moment, now impart the kind of pinpoint accuracy to this missile as has been obtained in liquid fueled rockets using fuel shut-off valves. This was revealed at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., by Robert J. Parks, Sergeant Project Director at the California Institute of Technology's jet propulsion laboratory.

Although the burning time of a solid fuel rocket can be calculated roughly, actual burn-out time may vary from predictions, sometimes by only fractions of seconds. To compensate for these variations, which can thwart accuracy, drag brakes in the form of fins or vanes can be extended or retracted from the Sergeant missile. This happens automatically at the precise time to correct the missile's path to its target.

Science News Letter, January 2, 1960

PUBLIC HEALTH

Doses of Sulfate Counter Radiostrontium

POISONOUS strontium in radioactive fallout from atomic bombs can be counteracted by doses of sulfates, if man responds as dogs do in experiments at Johns Hopkins Medical School.

Research reported by Drs. Mackenzie Walser, John W. Payne and Ann A. Browder to the American Cancer Society shows that sulfates cause animals injected with strontium to excrete in urine five to 20 times as much radioactive strontium as they normally would.

The sulfate infusions might be used therapeutically in the case of a laboratory accident or massive amounts of strontium in radioactive ash such as befell Japanese fishermen a few years ago, but they would not be useful in the gradual piling up of strontium in bones in normal fallout.

Science News Letter, January 2, 1960

TECHNOLOGY

Foresee Address-Reading Machine for Post Offices

A $114,000 CONTRACT for development of an address-reading letter sorting machine has been awarded by the U. S. Post Office Department in Washington to Farrington Manufacturing Company, Alexandria, Va.

The contract calls for the machine to read printed or typewritten addresses on envelopes, and sort them at a minimum rate of 10,000 letters an hour to at least 40 destinations. The transistorized prototype is to be ready by mid-1961.

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