

OCEANOGRAPHY

Test Drilling for Moho

► WELL DRILLING aimed at piercing through the ocean floor to the earth's depths was scheduled to begin March 12, and continue for a month.

The first in a series of wells that scientists hope will eventually reveal the secrets of the mantle underneath the earth's crust will be drilled near Guadalupe Island in the Pacific Ocean.

A remodeled drilling ship, especially rigged for the project, will drill in water nearly two and one-half miles deep. No other ship has drilled in depths of more than a few hundred feet of water.

Scientists hope the test probe will yield enough scientific information for the final assault: penetrating the earth's mantle, 1,000 feet below the ocean floor.

The project, which is sponsored by the National Academy of Sciences, is actually the preliminary work before drilling the

"Mohole," aimed at obtaining an actual sample of the mantle.

The mantle, which accounts for about 84% of the earth's volume, lies underneath the earth's crust, the relatively thin upper layer on which the oceans and continents rest. Little is known about the mantle except that it carries shock waves from earthquakes much faster than does the crust.

The contact between the soft layers of the crust and the mantle is known as the Mohorovicic discontinuity, or "Moho," after the Yugoslav seismologist who discovered it. The project for a hole through the Moho became known as Project Mohole.

The crust forms a thin veneer above the mantle. It is thickest under the continents and thins out under the oceans. Scientists picture the lighter crust "floating" on a dense, but plastic-like, mantle.

• Science News Letter, 79:162 March 18, 1961

ARCHAEOLOGY

New Link to Old Jericho

► MUD-BRICK HOUSES and plastered floors may have been a dime a dozen in the late stone age.

A new find of a pre-Sumerian culture in Turkey that includes remains of these buildings, found earlier at Old Testament Jericho, has been made.

Dr. Gus W. Van Beek, Smithsonian Institution archaeologist, told SCIENCE SERVICE such buildings may have been very common in the Neolithic, or new stone age, although only very few have been discovered so far.

He said it is quite possible this building method had spread from Turkey to Palestine, or vice versa, and had extended over large areas.

The new find, made by Dr. James Mallaart, assistant director of the British Archaeological Institute in Ankara, dates back to 7000 B.C. The floors of the build-

ings were polished to make them less porous and waterproof, as were the floors at the Old Testament Jericho site, Dr. Van Beek said.

Jericho is the oldest known city complete with city walls, he said. It goes back to 9000 B.C., or the beginning of the Neolithic age.

However, it is often difficult to find Neolithic layers of cultural remains because they frequently are so low they are below the water table. This is especially true in Mesopotamia, he said.

For this reason, the new find by Dr. Mallaart is important. It is also significant as an indication that the Neolithic culture extended over larger areas than evidence has shown so far.

Drs. Van Beek and Mallaart worked together on the Old Testament Jericho site.

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NATURAL RESOURCES

Need Faster Information

► HORSE AND BUGGY methods of circulating information to scientists are giving way to computer-type machines that can prevent duplication of effort.

"Grave wastage of men, money, facilities and time" can result unless there is effective circulation of information, Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (D.-Minn.), chairman of the Subcommittee on Reorganization and International Organizations of the Committee on Government Operations, charged.

By the end of March Senator Humphrey's committee will complete a two-volume report for the White House. From this information, Dr. Jerome B. Wiesner, Presi-

dent Kennedy's science adviser, is expected to have sufficient facts to recommend elimination of hand-managed index cards, inadequate to cover the thousands of scientific projects in research.

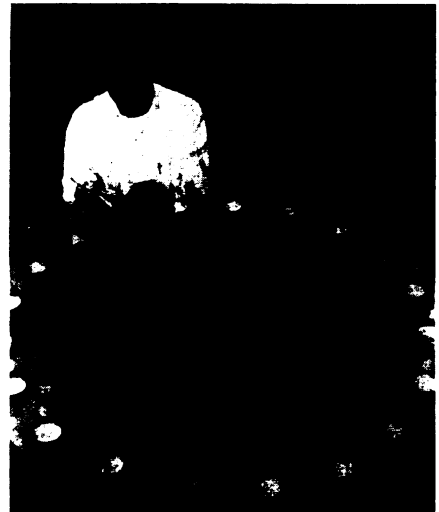
Senator Humphrey's committee showed that there are now some 22,924 biomedical projects supported by the Government at a cost of more than \$455,000,000. Of these, 12,065 are supported by the National Institutes of Health and the other 10,859 are supported by other Government agencies.

So far primary attention has been paid to information about published material. This leaves scientists undertaking new projects

without proper knowledge of what already may have previously been done.

The Science Information Exchange of the Smithsonian Institution, formerly known as the Bio-Sciences Information Exchange, is expected to expand its information coverage to include registration of current projects in the mathematical, physical, engineering and social sciences.

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GNAT MERRY-GO-ROUND—Gnat traps, devised to combat the gnat pest in southern California, consist of inverted glass funnels that turn slowly on a motor-driven platform to lure the gnats inside. The funnels contain a substance equal in attraction to gnats as that of humans. University of California, Riverside, Calif., scientists add repellents to cut down the attracting power.

METEOROLOGY

Tornado Season Hits U. S Full Force

► THE TORNADOES that recently cut a swath through Illinois and Indiana provide a grim warning: the tornado season is here.

Although the season had its usual slow start, the time for twisters is ripening, and will last until the summer months.

More than half the tornadoes strike in April, May and June. Most occur between noon and midnight, with the most dangerous hours between the afternoon hours of four and six.

When a tornado strikes, the safest place is an underground shelter. A tornado warning means take cover immediately. If no shelter is available, head for the nearest ditch or depression in the ground.

The terrifying twisters kill tens of persons and cause millions of dollars worth of damage in the United States each year. The tornado that ripped through southern Chicago recently killed one person, injured at least 115 persons and caused \$5,000,000 worth of damage.

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