

GENERAL SCIENCE

Additive Suit Dismissed

► THE SUIT against the Government brought by the manufacturer of battery additive AD-X2 has been dismissed "with prejudice."

Dr. Allen V. Astin, director of the National Bureau of Standards, said this was the first time that a suit referred to the U. S. Court of Claims by Congress has been dismissed with prejudice, which means the suit cannot be brought again. The complaint claimed damages of about \$2,400,000 because of the alleged actions of the National Bureau of Standards in connection with the battery additive.

The suit against the Government was referred in 1957 to the Court of Claims by the House of Representatives, following a long and often bitter controversy over the additive.

Dr. Astin said he was particularly happy because the Department of Justice achieved

dismissal of the suit without resorting to expensive trial procedures. The dismissal was requested by the plaintiff after being advised in pre-trial conferences of the nature of the Government's defense of the suit.

In April, 1953, Dr. Astin was dismissed as director of the National Bureau of Standards by then Secretary of Commerce Sinclair Weeks because of displeasure over a report on storage battery additives. After much furor, Dr. Astin was temporarily reinstated. Then, after a thorough investigation by the National Academy of Sciences, Dr. Astin was permanently reinstated.

Secretary Weeks accepted and endorsed the Academy's report giving the National Bureau of Standards a clean bill of health with respect to the battery additive tests, then resigned slightly later.

Both the Post Office Department and the Federal Trade Commission as well as the Senate Small Business Committee were involved in the controversy concerning the battery additive during the mid-1950's.

• Science News Letter, 80:433 December 30, 1961

PUBLIC HEALTH

Have Cholera Vaccination If Going to Philippines

► ALL AMERICANS going to the Philippine Islands are advised to take precautions against possible cholera contacts, Dr. Ralph W. McComas, foreign operations chief, Division of Foreign Quarantine, U. S. Public Health Service, told SCIENCE SERVICE.

Vaccination against cholera is advised, although the present outbreak in the Philippines does not appear to be a true cholera, but a paracholera, Dr. McComas said. People leaving the Islands, must also have valid certificates against cholera.

So far, the outbreak, which has been of epidemic proportions in rural areas of the Philippines since October, is not believed to be serious enough to be internationally quarantinable, Dr. McComas said, but routine precautions are being taken.

The Philippines Embassy in Washington, D. C., said some volunteer teams in the Philippines were going into the central and southern areas to give vaccination against cholera.

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RADIO

Radar Yardstick to Sun Most Powerful in World

See Front Cover

► THE FIRST SUCCESSFUL results in a long-term study of radar reflections from the sun have been announced by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The measurements were made with a new very high frequency space radar system recently installed in Texas by MIT's Lincoln Laboratory. The first radar contacts with the sun were made by the Space Radioscience Laboratory of Stanford University, but this is the first time extended regular measurements have been possible.

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RADIO ASTRONOMY

West Ford Needles Could Orbit 100 Years

► THE COPPER NEEDLES of Project West Ford could stay in earth orbit 100 years if they ever are ejected from their canister and spread into an earth-circling band of reflecting radio waves as originally planned.

The century lifetime was estimated by Dr. S. F. Singer of the University of Maryland, now at the University of California's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, Pasadena, Calif. He reports in the British scientific journal, *Nature*, 192:1061, 1961, that the lifetime of the needles could be 100 years if their charge is only one-tenth of a voltage unit more than expected.

The canned copper wires were carried into orbit aboard a Midas satellite on Oct. 21 from Point Arguello, Calif. The project was bitterly opposed by many astronomers, particularly radio astronomers, and received a vote of opposition by the International Astronomical Union at its Berkeley meeting.

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Questions

GEOPHYSICS—How far above the earth does the helium halo extend? p. 427.

MEDICINE—Which wrong diagnosis was made in cases of spinal tumors? p. 432.

PUBLIC HEALTH—What groups are considered high influenza risks? p. 429.

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