

They can be designed to produce electricity for homes and businesses, again like Shippingport, or to test the effect of nuclear radiation on materials, such as the recently completed Engineering Test Reactor at Idaho Falls, Idaho.

They can be used to drive submarines like the pressurized water type in the Nautilus or teach students the workings of atomics.

But regardless of the type, size or purpose, when the Shippingport reactor goes critical, the United States will have come of atomic power age. If this time comes before year's end, when it is expected, it will be on the 15th anniversary of the first reactor in the world—Chicago Pile 1, started up in December, 1942.

Science News Letter, December 7, 1957

**BIOLOGY**

**Tests Show Alcoholism May Be Due to Heredity**

► **BLOOD** chemistry and urine tests have shown that alcoholism may be due to hereditary factors.

A group of Texas scientists told the National Academy of Sciences meeting in New York that they studied a group of male alcoholics and compared their biochemistry to that of a normal group who drank only in moderation.

Among the things compared were the total number of white blood cells, the amount of sodium, potassium and calcium in the blood, blood sugar, and the chemical composition of urine.

In all these characteristics, the alcoholics showed significant differences from the normals.

"While the evidence is far from complete, there is a strong presumption that a number of these items are under genetic control," the scientists said.

If this is true, then the ground work has been laid for tests that could be used to spot youngsters who are likely to develop into alcoholics.

The scientists reporting the findings were Drs. Roger J. Williams, Richard B. Pelton, Hertta-Maija Hakkinen and Lorene L. Rogers, The University of Texas, Austin.

Science News Letter, December 7, 1957

**AGRICULTURE**

**Aphid-Resistant Alfalfa Developed by U.S.D.A.**

► A NEW VARIETY of alfalfa, highly resistant to the spotted alfalfa aphid, can soon be grown, the U. S. Department of Agriculture has announced.

Named Moapa, the alfalfa was developed from resistant plants selected from a variety that is susceptible to the aphid. Each year the insect causes millions of dollars in damage to alfalfa. The variety is described as a non-winter, hardy alfalfa and is suitable for planting where the "parent" alfalfa variety, African, is grown.

Scientists with the crops research division of USDA's Agricultural Research Service, USDA's entomology research division and the University of Nevada's agricultural experiment station developed the new plant.

Science News Letter, December 7, 1957

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