

ARCHAEOLOGY

Court Decision Spurs Search of Mexican Ruins

THE MEXICAN Supreme Court has ruled that the country's archaeological sites are under jurisdiction of the federal government, and not that of the individual states.

Upheld by this decision, federal government archaeologists will proceed at once to make excavation at Monte Alban where the spectacular discovery of a treasure tomb was reported last January. Alfonso Caso, government archaeologist and discoverer of the Monte Alban tomb, has already gone to the site accompanied by a staff consisting of Eduardo Noguera, Juan Valenzuela, Horacio Herrera, Augustin Garcia, and six archaeology student assistants.

A three times greater appropriation is available for the coming season at Monte Alban. More tombs are to be excavated. These appear to be almost innumerable, the ancient necropolis seeming to have had a vast population of dead. The surveying and stratigraphic studies will be resumed, and the archaeologists hope to learn something of the relationship between Monte Alban and the Maya region.

At the ruins of a Zapotec fortress city called Quiengola, archaeologists will start other explorations. Quiengola has never heretofore been studied.

The coming of the dry season has been awaited in order that explorations at Texmelincan, in the mountains of

Guerrero, may be resumed. At the Toltec city of San Juan Teotihuacan, excavation of the "Avenue of the Dead" will continue.

At the Mayan city of Chichen Itza, in Yucatan, Mexican government archaeologists will continue to explore the interior of the city's highest pyramid and temple. This is the Temple of Kukulcan, the Bird-Snake. Within the 90-foot pyramid on which the temple stands, a smaller temple-topped pyramid was found last season. This year tunnels will be bored to fix the shape and size of the inner pyramid and to determine whether there may be still more structures hidden within.

At Cholula, where the largest pyramid in the world is located, excavations were not interrupted by the rainy season, because all the work has been under shelter. Innumerable smaller structures have been found inside the great pyramid, as if several city blocks of minor buildings had been covered up.

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PLANT PATHOLOGY

New Beet Variety Resists Disease

U. S. NO. 1. That is the name of a new beet: a new variety produced by the plant breeders of the U. S. Department of Agriculture to strike the first heavy blow at the curly-top disease which is a grave menace to the whole western beet-sugar industry and at present actually affects seriously one-third of the total acreage planted to beets.

U. S. No. 1 has a high degree of resistance to curly top, and although the scientists believe that even better varieties will be produced in the future, they feel that this one is quite good enough to justify extensive planting. Test plantings have shown the new variety to produce from twelve to eighteen tons an acre, while commercial varieties grown in comparison yielded from seven to fourteen tons. The new beet produced from 4,189 to 6,185 pounds gross sugar an acre and the other from 2,755 to 4,738 pounds.

It is planned to have all the seed of U. S. No. 1 grown in this country, thus establishing an extensive new American industry, and at the same time enabling the Department of Agriculture to exercise effective supervision over it. It is expected that enough seed for the entire acreage now infested with curly top will be available by 1934.

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Vegetable Assassin

AS THE SHRUB thickets and weed patches become more and more reduced to bare brown stems, we are able to see more clearly some of the assassins' work that has been going on among them during the summer. In almost any tangle, especially in low, rich lands, you are apt to find the way blocked by thin but rawhide-tough stems of dodder, that bind stalks and branches into one yielding but impenetrable mass.

Ordinary vines, like those of the bindweed or even of the woody grape or Virginia creeper, can be rent loose of their tendrils or twinnings, but if you tug on the dodder either its stems break in your fingers or the branch to which they are holding has to give way. If you look at their points of attachment you will see why. Instead of merely twining round or hanging on with twisted tendrils, the dodder has driven little rootlike processes into the very fiber of its support.

And these rootlike processes are not mere supporting fingers, either. They are so many hungry vampire mouths, that suck the life sap of the unfortunate plants that are their victims, for the dodder is a complete parasite.

As the dodder starts in the spring, from the seed, it looks innocent enough. It has its pair of little green leaves, like any other respectable plant. But from the time it wraps its first coil around a plant stem it betrays its tiger ways. It drives the sucking fingers into its unwilling host, it abandons its own roots, it never produces any more leaves, and it remains a pallid yellow, never wearing the good chlorophyll green which is the badge of all honorable, self-supporting plants.

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▼ The Science Service radio address next week will be on the subject,

R WHAT BLOOD TELLS

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O at 12:45 P. M., Eastern Standard Time

Over Stations of The Columbia Broadcasting System