Do You Know?

The term *saran* applies to a series of resins chemically known as vinylidene chloride copolymers from which many plastic articles are made.

Flexibility is the property of *glass fibers* which distinguishes them from other glasses; they are flexible merely because they are exceedingly thin in relation to their length.

Electrochemical processes are being used more and more in industry for the preparation of a variety of materials such as chlorine and other gases; they are increasingly used also in refining metals.

The famous *Kensington stone,* so-called because found near Kensington, Minn., is now at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C.; its runic inscriptions purport to be the last message of a lost Norwegian exploration party perhaps massacred by Indians in 1362.

ORDNANCE

Shotgun Fired By Bringing Up Against the Shoulder

➤ A SHOTGUN that can be fired by merely bringing it sharply against the shoulder, without touching the trigger, is the subject of patent 2,441,787, granted to Ernest Zryd of Beloit, Ohio. A movable section of the butt-plate is linked to the trigger mechanism by means of a rod running through the butt; when this is pressed it fires the piece. It is thus possible to use the weapon with mittened hands in cold weather.

Science News Letter, June 5, 1948

waging of a major battle.

The world's unappeasable hunger for bread gives great importance to the fight against insects that attack stored grain, the speaker continued. We have been losing about 300,000,000 bushels of stored grain every year, worth more than $600,000,000 at present prices. Losses in corn alone amount to 150,000,000 bushels a year, enough if saved to feed 8,800,000 hogs to a 225-pound market weight. By rat-tight construction, DDT spraying against insects and frequent inspection during the storage period these losses must be reduced.

Science News Letter, June 5, 1948

CHEMISTRY

Urge Sharing of Isotopes

American scientific group proposes that the international office of the United Nations be empowered to distribute isotopes for research abroad.

➤ DISTRIBUTION of "non-dangerous" isotopes, by-products of the piles which are used to make atomic bombs, by an international office of the United Nations was proposed by the Federation of American Scientists meeting in Washington.

The Federation emphasized that the isotopes are important for research in medicine, agriculture and industry but are not useful for making atomic bombs. The suggested international office would set standards for the handling and naming of the isotopes in addition to serving as a clearing house for distribution of the material.

Although the U. S. has a near monopoly of these isotopes at present, the Federation report said that small uranium piles which can produce these important by-products are now operating in Canada and Great Britain.

"In France and probably the U. S. S. R., such piles are scheduled for early construction and operation," it was reported. Other countries listed as planning production of isotopes are Sweden, Norway, and India.

Setting up an office for international distribution of isotopes would aid the international exchange of scientific information, counteract ill feeling toward this nation by some scientists abroad and advance the peaceful uses of atomic research, the report contended.

Warning of a "disturbing change" in the attitude of some scientists in non-English-speaking countries toward the U. S., the report declared, "Upon investigation we believe most of the accusations and suspicions regarding American behavior to be unwarranted, but the circumstances are such that denial is difficult or impossible."

A system of international distribution of isotopes would bring about better understanding among scientists of many nations, the Federation argued.

The report suggested that an international organization such as the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission, the World Health Organization or the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization call an international conference on isotopes.

"We believe that the discussions might lead to an executive agreement or charter setting up an international office within the United Nations framework to deal with the distribution of isotopes," the report said.

The Federation explained that distribution of isotopes by a UN group might not help in reaching an agreement in the control of atomic weapons, but the report said that an international institution operating in the field of atomic energy might "modify some viewpoints regarding control."

Prof. Arthur Roberts, physicist at the State University of Iowa and chairman of the Federation, said that "the proposal might well be undertaken by the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission if the General Assembly deems it advisable."

Science News Letter, June 5, 1948

SOCIOLOGY-PHYSICS

"Social Physics" Applies Laws of Gravity to Income

➤ A NEW science in which laws of gravity are applied to such matters as rents, land values or the national income was described to the Population Association of America meeting in Philadelphia by Dr. John Q. Stewart, associate professor of astronomical physics at Princeton University.

Although "social physics" is only in its early stages and not yet accepted as