

METEOROLOGY

Man-Controlled Climate

"More trouble than atom bomb" is Dr. Ahlmann's opinion of man's possible eventual control of the climate. He advocates intense study of sun's effects.

► "I HOPE man never learns to control the climate of the world, because if he does, it will produce more trouble than the atom bomb."

This was the opinion of Dr. Hans W. Ahlmann, Swedish climatologist and diplomat, given in an interview with SCIENCE SERVICE. Dr. Ahlmann pointed out that different men, nations and continents would have different ideas as to how to control climate and this would make the trouble.

"Look at the difference between the ideas of the tourists and the farmers on rain," he pointed out.

Dr. Ahlmann, who is Swedish ambassador to Norway as well as one of the world's leading climatologists, advocated an intense study of the sun's effects on climate. It is becoming more and more understood, he said, that variations in the sun are responsible for variations in the world climate. But we do not yet know how to measure those variations, he pointed out.

Ultraviolet radiation, sun spots and other physical facts about the sun—we must un-

derstand and measure their effects on the various layers of our atmosphere from the stratosphere on down, he declared. Now it is all hypothesis, he said.

"No man can imagine a physical concept and its logical consequences," he emphasized. "We must have facts and measurements."

It was when he was asked whether, after these measurements were made and man came to an understanding of the causes of variations in world climate, man would be able to control his climate, that Dr. Ahlmann said, "I hope not."

He added that the possibility of control of climate was slight. As to rainmaking, the first attempts of man to control at least a part of his climate, Dr. Ahlmann did little more than smile. Man-made rain, he pointed out, falls on the woman's laundry as well as on the farmer's fields.

The climatologist addressed the meeting of the International Geographical Union in Washington.

Science News Letter, August 23, 1952

GERONTOLOGY

Healthy Elderly People

► AN IMPORTANT part of the task of keeping elderly people healthy is to keep them feeling loved and wanted and useful.

Loneliness, according to some authorities, may be as bad as sickness. For that reason old people should be encouraged to form clubs. The clubs can be for bridge or canasta or other games, and for the more active old persons there can be clubs for sports of the less strenuous kind. Or the clubs can be very simple get-togethers for talk and perhaps light refreshments. The important thing is that the clubs will provide companionship.

Psychiatrists believe that the breakdowns of elderly people which send them to mental hospitals can in many cases be prevented. Old people need to learn to accept their limitations and to develop skills within the range of their capabilities. But to do this they need someone to show interest and confidence in their ability to learn new skills.

Most old people want to be independent and live in their own homes as long as possible. In England the government has converted a building into small apartments for aged people who have no families or homes of their own. Here they can live with neighbors of their own age for companionship, instead of having to be in hos-

pitals for the chronically sick or in almshouses.

Elderly people who are encouraged to learn new skills, to keep active and to acquire new interests are happier, and they are less of a burden to their families and more lovable.

Those of you who are not yet in the elderly class should remember that life is growing longer for everyone these days. The smart person starts, while still young, to acquire interests and skills that he can keep on with long after his active working career has ended.

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HORTICULTURE

Night Light Produces Begonias for Christmas

► CHRISTMAS CORSAGES or New Year's Eve table decorations containing bright red begonias?

That is what the experiments of Dr. A. M. Kofranek, assistant professor of floriculture at the University of California at Los Angeles, seem to promise for the future.

Tuberous begonias normally bloom in southern California gardens throughout the summer, but are dormant through the win-

ter—even in greenhouses. Dr. Kofranek has been able to produce winter-blooming flowers in the greenhouse by illumination during the night.

The illumination sources are five- and ten-foot candles of light. So that the plants may bloom by Christmas, the period of illumination lasts from three to four hours each night from Oct. 1 on.

This light treatment tends to stretch the plant too much to make it desirable as a pot plant, but the bloom is ideal for a corsage or table decoration.

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