

GENERAL SCIENCE

Condon Subpoenaed

Topflight physicist, president-elect of the AAAS, ordered to appear before the House Un-American Activities Committee in Chicago.

► DR. EDWARD U. CONDON, former head of the National Bureau of Standards, has been subpoenaed to appear before a meeting of the House Un-American Activities Committee in Chicago on Sept. 5.

Dr. Condon received the subpoena at Corning, N. Y., where he is research director of the Corning Glass Works. More than four years ago, he was charged by the committee with being "one of the weakest links in our atomic security." He has also been praised for his contribution to the development of the atomic bomb. He is one of the nation's top physicists.

Despite demands at the time by Dr. Condon that he be allowed to answer the charge before the committee, he was not given that opportunity.

Dr. Condon told SCIENCE SERVICE that: "I have always been willing to answer any questions put to me by the committee. I hope this hearing will, once and for all, clear up these by now thoroughly discredited charges."

The committee is scheduled to hold hearings in Chicago for a full week. It is not known why it was decided to invite Dr. Condon to appear in Chicago. However, Chicago is the home of Rep. Richard B. Vail, R., Ill., who was a member of the committee at the time the original charges were made.

Chairman John S. Wood, D., Ga., said he thought Rep. Vail might be present at the

hearing. He also expected most of the committee members to be present. Chairman Wood said each member of the committee would be given an opportunity to ask Dr. Condon any questions they might have. He said he didn't know for sure, but he thought they would have to do with the old charges. The hearing would be open, he added, "unless I am overruled."

Chairman Wood told SCIENCE SERVICE that the subpoena was issued because, "Dr. Condon has been bellyaching for a chance to appear before the committee. He has refused a couple of invitations, so we subpoenaed him."

Dr. Condon said that there had been only one invitation from the committee, issued two months ago. He explained that he "respectfully declined" that invitation because from the tone of it he thought it was made merely as a convenience to him. The case was so old by then, he said, that he saw little use of going over it again. Then he reiterated his complete willingness to answer any questions put to him by the committee.

Dr. Condon will have no opportunity to make a statement before the committee on his own behalf. Chairman Wood explained that witnesses are never given this privilege. However, it is expected that Dr. Condon will have something to say outside the hearing room at the time.

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by rain and winds that wash and blow away surface dusts and sprays. Most important, systemics would kill the pink bollworm inside the cotton squares and bolls where present-day insecticides cannot reach.

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AGRICULTURE

Billion Acres Grassland Give Only Quarter Food

► ONE OF the great potentials for increased food production in the U. S. is in grasslands, Secretary of Agriculture Charles Brannan told the opening session of the Sixth International Grassland Congress, State College, Pa.

The U. S. has a billion acres of grassland, he said, but is getting only about one-fourth of the possible food value from such land. To increase production of livestock and livestock products, the Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with land-grant colleges, has launched a 10-point "Better Grassland" program.

These programs, he said, are being carried out in each state, and more than one-fourth of our grassland has already been improved in some way under them. There is, however, much more improvement work to be done on about 90% of our grassland acres.

The technical agricultural advances developed in this country are not surrounded by an Iron Curtain, Secretary Brannan stated. The U. S., in fact, has borrowed grasses from Europe and Africa, alfalfa from Turkey, and clovers from Iran and Korea.

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PHYSICS

Electron Microscopy Speeded by New Devices

► MUCH VALUABLE research time is expected to be saved by two electron microscope devices developed by Francis W. Bishop of the University of California's Atomic Energy Project at Los Angeles.

One is a device that monitors the stability of the power supply that feeds the electronic lenses. The slightest fluctuation in current often markedly affects the quality of the photographs taken through the microscope. The new monitoring device gives advance warning of instability in the power supply, allowing the operator to make adjustments before damage is done. A "magic eye," suited to the darkness in which electron microscopists work, blinks advance warning of trouble to come.

The second is a diaphragm adjuster which functions similarly to that of a camera. It permits the viewer to select and center any one of five apertures, through which images are brought into sharper focus, by a simple external adjustment. Formerly each of the apertures, which range from .001 to .005 of an inch in diameter, had to be inserted and centered by complicated, manual trial and error.

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ENTOMOLOGY

Systemics Fight Bollworm

► CONTROL OF pink bollworm, a serious cotton insect pest, through use of systemic insecticides should be possible according to entomologists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture and the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station, Brownsville.

A systemic insecticide is one that is absorbed by a growing plant in quantities great enough to destroy insects that may feed on the plant.

The scientists are testing hundreds of chemical compounds to find out if they can be used as systemic insecticides. They are seeking chemicals that can be absorbed by cotton plants so that pink bollworms developing inside the green cotton bolls will be killed.

So far a dozen organic phosphate compounds that will destroy the pink bollworm through systemic action have been found. However, the scientists caution, the knowledge that some of these chemicals can be

absorbed by the cotton plant in sufficient amounts to kill the pink bollworms in the bolls is a long way from practical control.

Research must be continued to determine what these insecticides will do under field conditions. It must be proved that they leave no chemical residues in the cotton fiber or seed that would be harmful to man or to livestock. There are the additional problems of correct dosages, methods and time of application, and cost.

If this research can prove the practical worth of certain chemicals as systemics, cotton farmers will have a means of controlling the pink bollworm, and possibly other serious cotton pests, with fewer applications of insecticide than are currently applied. New fruit and foliage developing on the plant would absorb a portion of the systemic already in the plant, making re-treatment unnecessary.

Systemic insecticides are almost unaffected