

Lightning Made To Test Power Supply Systems

LeRoy, N.Y.—LeRoy is a "lightning" town. And the lightning, of man-made variety, is just as potent as nature's, with electrical kicks of some 2,250,000 volts. The simulated lightning is being manufactured at the John Lapp High Voltage Laboratory, research and development branch of Lapp Insulator Co., Inc. of LeRoy.

The purpose is to develop insulators and hardware that can contain the wallop along a 750,000-volt test transmission line.

The test line, which would carry twice the power supply of present utility transmission systems, is being built jointly by American Electric Power Service Corp. and Westinghouse Electric Corp. The role of the Lapp Laboratory in the project is to contribute research information and materials to serve as insulators, clamps and fittings.

At the Lapp Laboratory, voltages duplicating that of lightning are created by an impulse generator for testing metal and porcelain materials.

Brent Mills, executive vice president of the LeRoy concern, said one of the obstacles facing engineers is adapting materials to control corona-flashing or sparking from conductors, clamps and insulators.

The corona, often visible and sometimes audible, is particularly violent at extra-high voltages and causes power failures and interference to radio and television reception.

New Car Buying Big Gainer In Economic Expansion in 1959

Washington—AP—Americans spent a record \$313.8 billion for goods and services in 1959—possibly because more of these were available than ever before.

"Every major category of family spending shared in the expansion," said the Commerce department, which issued the report. It said new car buying showed the biggest percentage gain.

The surge in auto sales, like the overall pickup in consumption spending, reflected a cyclical upturn in the economy from the 1958 recession, the report said.

Compared to 1958, consumption spending rose by 8.9 per cent. But allowing for price markups on many non-food items, the increase was only 5.8 per cent.

Well Above Average
This was well above the average gain of slightly more than 3 per cent for 1947-59. But the 1958 increase was only 0.9 per cent.

Those who believe government spending should be increased to meet military, economic and social needs of the nation have argued that growth of private consumption should be slowed by higher income taxes or a national sales tax.

Others argue that the nation's non-defense needs can best be filled by maximum reliance on private enterprises and a minimum of government activity.

Spending for transportation, mainly new cars, jumped 15.4 per cent last year to a record \$38.9 billion. This large increase was in part the result of the sharp drop in car buying in 1958.

Failed To Equal Record
Although spending reached a new high, the number of new domestic cars sold failed to equal the 1955 record. Price increases and greater buying of foreign cars accounted for the disparity between dollars and volume.

The department reported a jump of 11.4 per cent in "personal business" spending. This included higher interest payments on installment debt—which hit a record last year—

along with higher non-premium costs of life insurance and other financial charges. Spending for food and tobacco rose 2.4 per cent to \$85.2 billion, the largest single item in the consumption total. A larger rise would have occurred but for declines in some farm and food prices.

Education Spending Up
Other types of spending which went up more than the

6.9 per cent average were: private education and research 8.3 per cent, recreation 8.9 per cent, religious and welfare activities 7.5 per cent and foreign travel 7.7 per cent.

Spending for clothing and jewelry rose 6.4 per cent, personal care 6.8 per cent, housing 6.6 per cent, household operation 6.8 per cent and medical care and death expenses 8.8 per cent.

"It might be remarked," he said, "that the mass education of our public school system is, in its way, a vast experiment on the effect of reducing all three of these factors to minimal values, and should accordingly, tend to suppress the occurrence of genius."

As far as the individual is concerned, this trend may be a boon, since genius is generally a costly gift. "Superficially an enviable piece of luck," he said, "it is actually a fatality which exacts tribute from the possessor. Extreme absorption in very hard work, with sometimes broken health, is one of the penalties. Isolation from contemporaries, often increasing with the years, is another."

The genius seldom has a normal family life. "Fifty-five per cent of this sample did not marry at all," he said.

According to census reports, by the age of 60, about the median for this group, approximately 90 per cent of the men of normal intellect are married.

For the study, McCurdy chose individuals who did extraordinary work in science, law, literature or politics. Their lives cover the period from 1497 to 1873.

Common Attributes
Natural superior intelligence was another common attribute, McCurdy's report showed, but this in itself does not guarantee the flowering of genius. It must be complemented by other factors.

McCurdy stated in his report, published by the Smithsonian Institution, that the following characteristics were found to be common to the childhood of those studied. —A high degree of attention focused on the child by parents and other adults, expressed in intensive educational measures and, usually, abundant love.

—Isolation from other children, especially outside the family.

—A rich efflorescence of fantasy, as a reaction to the other two conditions.

Woman Motorist Uses Bus as Brake

Los Angeles—"Hit the bus!" Gerald Antonson shouted at his wife when the foot throttle of the family sedan stuck. That's what she did while driving—at 30 miles an hour. The couple escaped with minor injuries. People boarding the standing bus downtown were unhurt.

Banner Year Seen For Use of Parks

Salem—AP—The State Parks Division has reported that 1960 apparently will be another banner year for Oregon park attendance.

The first six months shows an increase in visitors for nearly all of the state's 175 parks.

Yaquina Bay State Park at Newport—traditionally the leader in day attendance—recorded 102,114 visitors for May compared to 67,797 for May last year.

Movie Explosion Wrecks Police Car

Nogales, Ariz.—Sheriff's deputies kept spectators and their vehicles at a safe distance when a film company blew up a movie set with seven tons of explosives.

Except for the set, the only damage was to the sheriff's patrol car, a quarter mile away. A large boulder ripped off the car's windshield and hood.

First Atomic Bomb Fired in New Mexico On July 16, 1945

Socorro, N.M.—AP—By a quirk of geography, and perhaps fate, a New Mexico wasteland barely aware of the 20th Century America became the maternity ward of the Atomic Age 15 years ago.

The first atomic bomb was triggered with uncertainty at Trinity Site (inexplicably named) before the startled eyes of its makers, July 16, 1945.

"It was an awesome experience," Dr. Marvin H. Wilkening recalled. He was among 50 to 60 scientists, technicians and military men on hand.

Tower Vaporized
The blast, far greater than any ever dreamed, vaporized the steel tower that held the bomb and glazed the desert sand.

Its power became known to the outside world in a short time. Twenty-one days later Hiroshima was hit, three days after that Nagasaki, and then on Aug. 12—less than a month after the New Mexico test—Japan surrendered and World War II came to an end.

The pre-dawn flash of light at Trinity Site—"brighter than daylight"—was seen scores of miles away. To soothe alarmed ranchers, the military reported there had been an ammunition depot explosion in the area that night.

This piece of misinformation hardly compared to the massive amount the rumor mills churned up in towns around Los Alamos, N.M., during the wartime years the bomb was being built there.

One report, prevalent in Santa Fe, insisted windshield wipers were being made for submarines.

The collection of world-known scientists—including Enrico Fermi and J. Robert Oppenheimer—were really racing against a phantom.

It was, of course, the unfounded fear that Nazi Germany too was developing the same weapon. Some of the very scientists at the former Los Alamos Boys Ranch School, on a remote mountain plateau, were exiles from Hitler's Europe.

Knowledge of Counters
Only 24 at the time, Wilkening had been brought in on the super-secret Manhattan Project because of his knowledge of neutron counters, called to official attention by his masters' thesis at Illinois Institute of Technology.

He is one of a handful of scientists who witnessed the first bomb test and the start of the first nuclear reaction

under Stagg Stadium at the University of Chicago two-and-a-half years before.

Seven hours after the Trinity Site explosion, Wilkening and a radiation team went into the blast area to start checking the level of radioactivity.

Wilkening now is a professor of physics and geophysics at New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology at Socorro, 35 miles from the first test ground.

His research still involves radioactivity, but a milder

type. He is studying natural radioactivity in the atmosphere.

Minneapolis—AP—A suburban electronics firm is now producing for the government a customer-operated postal sub-station for use in super markets and other retail establishments. The vendor sells three denominations of stamps, stamp books, two sizes of stamped envelopes, post cards and stationery. It weighs mail, keeps a running account of purchases and makes change.

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Catholic Schools Teach Catechism With Modern Aids

Washington—AP—U.S. Catholic schools are using modern audio-visual aids to teach an historic old catechism.

The new teaching materials are a series of sound-and-color film strips which cover, in narrative style, the same basic material which Catholic children formerly learned in question-and-answer form in the 75-year-old Baltimore Catechism.

The film strip series took 10 years to produce, and cost \$300,000. It was developed at St. John's University, Brooklyn, N.Y., and is known as the St. John's Catechism.

Although the 30th and last filmstrip in the series was just completed, the first units of the lesson program have already been introduced in about 8,000 of the nation's 15,000 Catholic parishes.

The late Pope Pius XII previewed the first part of the series in 1957, and pronounced it a "wonderful" advance in religious education.

Protestant churches have made extensive use of film strips in their Sunday school program. But this is the first time that Catholics have used the technique for such basic instruction as the catechism.

The Rev. Michael F. Mullen, C. M. St. John's professor who supervised the film strip preparation, said the whole purpose was "to make the catechism more understandable" to children, particularly at grade school ages.

Each of the 30 film strips presents a lesson built around one chapter of the catechism. As the color pictures are projected on a screen, the narration is supplied by a recording. It takes 10 minutes to complete the showing. Then there is a question period and a discussion period.

Father Mullen emphasizes that the film strips are not intended to supplant the Baltimore Catechism, which will continue to be studied in the traditional question-and-answer form, but merely to make it easier for children to grasp its concepts "before they get down to the memory work."

Much of the art work was done by Vincent Colabella, who painted more than 2,000 water-color illustrations for the series. A large part of the narrative was written by the Rev. Lawrence A. Lonergan of St. John's, with advice from Fulton Ousler, Clare Boothe Luce and other prominent Catholic authors.

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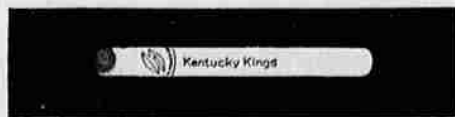
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