tributed through the heart of the best white pine country in and adjoining the Coeur d'Alene, St. Joe and Clearwater National Forests, working on government, state and private lands.

Control work was also done in the Lake States and in the Northeast, on national, state and private forest lands, and to some extent in portions of the national forests in Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and eastern Tennessee. The work on the national forests was directed jointly by the U. S. Forest Service and the blister rust control division of the Bureau of Plant Industry.

The disease is controlled by the eradication of currant and gooseberry bushes of the genus Ribes, which form the alternate hosts for the blister rust fungus, and spread the disease to the pines. Control work was done both by hand pulling and by the use of chemicals. It was necessary to cover every foot of ground to find all the wild currant bushes.

In the northern Idaho operations each strip covered was marked by a string line and the crews working in that section this season used 40 tons of cotton twine, laying out some 56,000 miles of line. The chemical crews worked the concentrations of wild black currant in the damp stream bottoms, spraying the plants with a commercial weed killer. About 225 tons of chemical were required for the Civilian Conservation Corps forces in the northern Idaho region.

Blister rust control is hard and monotonous work. It involves constant struggling through thick brush and down timber on steep slopes in the hot sun, but, according to Forest Service officials, the crews rapidly became seasoned to the job and turned out some excellent work.

With the closing of the blister rust control work season, now that the frost will be knocking the leaves from the Ribes plants, the workers on this project are turning to tree planting, truck trail construction and other jobs on the forestry work program.

ITEMS

A NEW comet was discovered by Dr. Fred L. Whipple, of the Harvard College Observatory, shortly after midnight on Saturday, October 21. It is at present in the constellation Taurus, the Bull, a little south of the familiar compact group of stars, the Pleiades. These two constellations may be seen low in the east at about nine o'clock in the evening. The new comet is moving slowly in a southwesterly direction. Its position, in the astronomical equivalents of latitude and longitude, was right ascension three hours twenty-three minutes, declination plus nine degrees twenty-two seconds, when discovered. The new visitor to our part of the solar system is not yet visible to the naked eye.

SOUND travels fast through solid rock. How fast, Dr. L. Don Leet, of the Harvard seismograph station, has been finding out by exploding dynamite and getting the travel records on earthquake-detecting instruments at a distance. These data are of value in calculating the elasticity and compressibility of the rocks, which in turn help to make earthquake records more accurate and intelligible. Dr. Leet made his set-ups in two places, one on granite at Rockport, Massachusetts, and the other on norite, an ancient igneous rock, at Sudbury, Ontario. He found that his dynamite-engendered longitudinal earthquake waves traveled through the granite at nearly 17,000 feet a second, and through the norite at over 20,000 feet a second. This is high speed compared with approximately 1,100 feet a second, which is the velocity of sound in still air. Dr. Leet's studies are reported in the October issue of *Physics*.

THE oft-repeated and widely believed declaration that the Baltic Sea is slowly becoming a fresh-water lake is not true, Professor V. Berg, well-known oceanographer, told the Fourth Hydrological Conference of the Baltic Countries at its meeting in Leningrad. So much fresh water flows into the Baltic that if no new salt water were added, the sea would contain nothing but fresh water after 187 years, mathematical calculations have indicated. But new salt water is constantly being carried into the Baltic by the currents that sweep through its narrow entrance. The amount of salt added depends on the salinity of the North Sea, and this varies from year to year. However, even as it is, Baltic water is much less salty than the water of most large arms of the ocean. North Sea water is usually from one and one half to two times as salty as that of the Baltic. And its northern arm, the Gulf of Bothnia, lying between Sweden and Finland, with its entrance partly blocked by submarine ridges, has water even less salty than that of the Baltic.