northern Guatemala. The site is being explored and partially restored by the museum archeologists in cooperation with the Guatemalan government. The most important single discovery this year was that of the oldest known dated stone monument of the lowland Maya tribes. Clearly legible inscriptions on the weathered and fragmentary piece give a date which, by one correlation of the Mayan and Christian calendars, corresponds to A.D. 32 and, by another correlation, to A.D. 292. Regardless of which of these dates is used, the stela is 36 years older than the archeologically famous Stela 9, discovered at Uaxactun, Guatemala, in 1916 by the Carnegie Institution of Washington, D.C., and 28 years older than the jade plaque, known as the Leyden Plate, which was found near Puerto Barrios, Guatemala, in 1864. Archeologists have theorized, on stylistic grounds, that the Leyden Plate, although it was not found at Tikal, was produced there, because of its resemblance to other stone carvings from the same city.

Automatic Weather Station

A new automatic "weather bureau" that can be set up anywhere in the world as a complete, unattended observatory supplying key data to a central office has been designed and built for the U.S. Army.

The weather station, a steel cubicle 7 by 7 by 8 feet and weighing less than a ton, is equipped to report by teletype code, in 15 seconds, its identification; the air temperature, from minus 40° to plus 120°F; the dew point temperature; the wind direction and velocity; and the barometric pressure and rainfall. It can also be equipped with radiation monitoring and warning instruments.

The new unit is a compact, transportable, automatic meteorological station, designed to operate unattended and automatically, taking observations and reporting data over wire or radio facilities to any central location, either on demand or at prescribed intervals, as desired. There is no limit to the number of stations that may be combined to form a world-wide weather observation network.

The new equipment, by eliminating the need for human supervision, makes possible a major expansion of world-wide meteorological observation and forecasting at minimum cost and eliminates the need for personnel to be stationed in remote locations.

News Briefs

The Public Health Service reported in June on the levels of radioactivity in milk collected during March from 12 sampling stations across the country. According to the report, the averages for all radioisotopes in the milk samples remained below the levels which the National Committee on Radiation Protection and Measurements currently suggests as permissible for the general population.

The milk-sampling network is part of the service's program of measurement of radioactivity in air, water, and food. Milk was chosen for the initial study of specific isotopes in foods because it is the easiest of all foods to sample and is produced throughout the year in all sections of the country.

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The world's largest installation for distilling fresh water from sea water has recently been completed, at a cost of $10,600,000. The plant is located on the island of Aruba in the Netherlands West Indies, off the coast of Venezuela. Electricity is produced by a by-product of the water distillation plant, at a cost of less than 3 mills per kilowatt hour, it was reported.

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Devices which generate electric power directly from heat, without the use of boilers and spinning generators, were described at a meeting of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers in St. Louis last month. One such device, called a fuel cell, would burn conventional fuels to produce a flow of usable current. The other, called a thermionic converter, might use heat from a nuclear reactor or from the rays of the sun.

In a fuel cell, a fuel such as hydrogen, coal, or carbon monoxide reacts with oxygen from the air. Instead of heat, this reaction generates electricity directly. In its simplest form, a thermionic converter consists of a vacuum tube in which one piece of wire is heated until it gives off electrons, while another, colder, piece collects the electrons and feeds them to an outside circuit.

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The Marine Biological Association of India was founded in January, with S. Jones as president. The association expects to issue a journal half-yearly. Membership is open to all interested. Correspondence may be addressed to the Secretary, Marine Biological Association of India, Marine Fisheries P.O., Mandapam Camp, South India.

Scientists in the News

Sir HARRY MELVILLE, secretary of Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, London, will arrive in the United States on 24 August. He will visit Washington (25–28 August); Kingsport, Tenn.; Ottawa, Canada. On 2 September he will attend the Faraday Society meeting in Kingston, Ontario, Canada.

B. J. RENDLE, principal scientific officer, Forest Products Research Laboratory, Princes Risborough, Aylesbury, England, will arrive on 19 July. He will attend the Northeastern Forest Tree Improvement Conference, Burlington, Vt., 18–19 August, and the ninth International Botanical Congress, Montreal, Canada, in August. His itinerary includes Connecticut; New York; Wisconsin; Vancouver, B.C.; Ottawa; and Chalk River, Ont.

HENRY L. BOCKUS, professor and chairman of the department of medicine at the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Medicine for 30 years, retired on 1 July. Former graduate students presented a portrait of Bockus to the university at the first annual meeting of the Bockus International Alumni Society of Gastroenterology, which was organized last year in his honor. At the group's first banquet, attended by 180 physicians from the United States, Europe, Africa, the Near and Far East, and Latin America, Bockus was given a specially designed map of the world that showed the location of the 325 gastroenterologist alumni of his program.

EDWARD C. WENTE, scientific staff member of Bell Telephone Laboratories until his retirement in 1954, and pioneer inventor of important devices for the motion picture, recording, broadcasting, and television industries, has been awarded the Gold Medal of the Acoustical Society of America.

LILLIAN M. GILBRETH, engineer and former chairman of the department of personnel relations at Newark College of Engineering, has received the Allan R. Cullimore Medal. The medal was established last year in memory of Dr. Cullimore, NCE's first president.

MURRAY KORNFELD, founder and executive director of the American College of Chest Physicians, received the college's Gold Medal during its recent