Films of The Week

Listing for readers' information of new 16mm and 8mm films on science, engineering, medicine and agriculture for professional, student and general audiences. For further information on purchase, rental or free loan, write to distributor.

ALUMINUM: METAL OF MANY FACES. 16mm, color, sound, 28 min. Shows mining of bauxite, the ore which contains aluminum; the technique by which aluminum is extracted from the ore; the ease with which the metal can be drawn, rolled, extruded, welded, and squeezed into almost any shape; and applications of aluminum in homes and cities. Free loan from Graphic Services, Bureau of Mines, 4800 Forbes Ave., Pittsburgh, Pa. 15213.

AUTOMOBILE TIRE HYDROPLANING. 16mm, color, sound, 11 min. Safety and driver training film which shows the hazards of driving on water-covered highways. Audience: high school and adult. Free loan from National Aeronautcs and Space Administration, Code FAD-2, Washington, D.C. 20546, or from NASA Research Centers.

DEVELOPMENT AND FABRICATION OF HFIR TARGET ELEMENTS. 16mm, color, sound, 14½ min. Depicts design and development of High Flux Isotope Reactor targe elements—and the development of suitable manufacturing processes—for the nation's transuranium program. Audience: scientists and engineers. Purchase $38.25 from Calvin Productions, 1105 Truman Road, Kansas City, Mo. 64106, or free loan information from Audio-Visual Branch, Division of Public Information, Atomic Energy Commission, Washington, D.C. 20545.

IT PAYS TO STAY OPEN. (FA-609) 16mm, color, sound, 23 min. Documents how low-cost lighting of airports, particularly utility-type airports, provides round-the-clock operations and can result in economic benefits to a community. Shows how two communities equipped their airports with low-cost runway and approach lighting. Audience: business men, airport personnel. Free loan from Federal Aviation Agency Film Library, AC-921, P.O. Box 25802, Oklahoma City, Okla. 73125. Purchase information from Office of Information Services, Federal Aviation Agency, Washington, D.C. 20553.

LANGUAGE OF THE BEE. 16mm, color, sound, 15 min. Dr. Karl von Frisch is shown as he performs some of the experiments which led to his amazing discovery of the language of bees, with actual dance patterns and sounds by which bees communicate being shown. Audience: grades 7-12. Purchase $135 or loan information from Moody Institute of Science, P.O. Box 25578, Los Angeles, Calif. 90025.

MEXICAN MAIZE. 16mm, color, sound, 9½ min. The men plant and cultivate the maize with an ox-drawn plow, and women and children work at preparing the corn for food. Then everyone participates in the end-of-plowing fiesta activities. Audience: elementary through adults. Purchase $115 and rental $8 from D. K. Cinquemani, 136 W. 16th St., New York, N.Y. 10011. (Produced in cooperation with the American Museum of Natural History.)

THE OTHER PASSENGER. (FA-601). 16mm, color, sound, 30 min. Depicts the duties of a Federal Aviation Agency Flight Operations Inspector including in-the-cockpit scenes of a jet during take-off and landing. Audience: general public. Free loan from Federal Aviation Agency Film Library, AC-921, P.O. Box 25802, Oklahoma City, Okla. 73125, or purchase information from Office of Information Services, Federal Aviation Agency, Washington, D.C. 20553.

SCIENCE OF THE SEA. 16mm, color, sound, 19 min. Defines the scope of oceanography by showing the tools, methods, and working conditions of the modern oceanographer, and emphasizes the importance of studying the sea and its usefulness to man. Audience: high school, college, vocational guidance groups, and adult groups. Purchase or rental information from International Film Bureau, 332 South Michigan Ave., Chicago 4, Ill. (Produced in collaboration with Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution.)

TECHNIQUE OF PLATELET TRANSFUSION —OM-1284. 16mm, color, sound, 22 min. Presents step-by-step demonstration of the platelet separation process, and portrays the family's role in contributing to a leukemic child's well-being through platelet transfusions. Audience: Blood bank personnel, hematologists, cancer chemotherapists, medical schools, and community organizations that are a source of blood donors. Free loan from Public Health Service Audio-Visual Facility, Atlanta, Ga. 30333.

Nature Note

St. Elmo's Fire

St. Elmo's fire is the luminous discharge of weak static electricity that sometimes glows or streams off pointed objects with various colors of green, blue, violet or even pink.

This eerie fire, occurring during thunderstorms, encircles exposed points of objects such as ships' masts, mountain peaks, steeples, lightning rods and wing tips or noses of aircraft. Sometimes the whole airplane seems to glow with fire. It has even been known to light up the ears of horses, horns of cattle or the hair on a person's head.

This glowing light received its name from mispronunciations of the name Saint 'Ermo or Saint Erasmus, an Italian bishop living in 300 A.D. This pious and gentle man became the patron saint of Mediterranean sailors, who regarded the fire as a personal and visible sign of his guardianship. Since it never seemed to create fire or destroy anything, the sailors considered it a beneficial and good omen against storms at sea. However, its so-called harmlessness has been questioned in modern times, since researchers believe this type of electrical discharge caused the disaster of the German airship, Hindenburg, which exploded May 6, 1937 while mooring at Lakehurst, N.J., after its successful trip across the Atlantic Ocean. Thunderstorms were threatening the area, and even though precautions were taken, St. Elmo's fire ignited the escaping hydrogen. The great airship slowly sank in flames to earth, killing 36 of its passengers while thousands of spectators and reporters watched.

Scientific explanation of the St. Elmo's fire is based on the phenomenon of point discharge—when a strongly electrified cloud passes a tip such as a ship mast, molecules of gas in the air are ignited and the region around the point becomes ionized and glows.