

Allen's

PRESS CLIPPING BUREAU

Established 1888

LOS ANGELES

San Francisco
Portland - Seattle

Los Angeles, Calif.
Examiner

(Cir. D. 359,112 - S. 697,000)

MAR 20 1960

Invasion From Mars? Microbes!

WASHINGTON (UPI) — A “war of the worlds” is now conceivable.

But the invaders most to be dreaded would not be intelligent Martians with great mechanical tripod legs and death rays like those in the novel by the late H. G. Wells.

They would be inimical microbes brought to earth as stowaways by the first spaceship to make the round trip to the red planet.

Scientists say it is not beyond the realm of possibility that organisms from bleak and arid Mars would multiply explosively in the more hospitable environment of earth, and devastate the globe.

The chance of such an invasion may be remote. But space scientists take it seriously enough to warn against letting it happen.

They also caution against



LEDERBERG

transporting earthly microbes to Mars. That would jeopardize scientific search for strictly Martian forms of life.

Dr. Joshua Lederberg, Nobel Prize-Winning professor of genetics at Stanford, believes that all human beings who visit other planets should be quarantined before returning until it is certain they are not carriers of pestilence.

“The introduction of foreign organisms,” Dr. Lederberg said, “might have disastrous consequences to our health, agriculture, economy, or comfort.”

The Bioscience Advisory Committee of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) voices similar fears and touched also on the possibility of contaminating the other planets.

Both Soviet and U. S. scientists agree on the necessity of sterilizing space probes aimed at Mars and Venus. And even though lunar life may seem unlikely, both nations have

taken great pains to make sure that vehicles launched toward the moon are free of micro-organisms.

ARCHIVAL COPY