

# Plastic Seaweed May Help Control of Beach Erosion

By REYNOLDS KNIGHT  
No one really knows why one ocean beach stays the same size year after year, while five miles away jetties and breakwaters are needed to keep the beach from washing out to sea.

Around the world, wherever land meets the sea, there is all too often a problem of beach erosion. Now something new is being tried—plastic seaweed. A durable fiber called polypropylene is being used near Bournemouth, England, to try to halt the severe erosion in that area. Long eight-foot clumps of the plastic have been anchored offshore in about 12 feet of water as the key part of the preservation program.

One theory is that the plastic may absorb some of the sea's restless energy and thus reduce the dangers of beach erosion. Engineers around the world will be watching the

Bournemouth experiment to see how well it works. The potential gains are tremendous—more land areas saved, more bathing beaches available for recreation, and fewer unsightly jetties.

**PURE SCIENCE?** — Our educational institutions have been placing so much emphasis on pure scientific research that there is a serious gap between the pure sciences and engineering development, a leading educator said at the Columbia University Engineering Centennial Symposium earlier this month. Instead of isolating basic research we should be emphasizing "a continuous flow from pure mathematics and basic scientific research into applied research and finally into production and on into the economic stream," declared Dr. John R. Dunning, dean of Columbia's School of

Engineering and Applied Science. "Today I rarely hear a student say he'd like to be an engineer because he'd like to build a large structure," he continued, adding that this may be a sign that the gap between pure and useful science should be filled. World leaders in engineering, science, business, education and government participated in the symposium at Columbia.

**THINGS TO COME** — Automatic machine that can turn out 1200 sandwiches an hour. Ingredients can be changed at any time by the device that slices and wraps automatically. . . . A robot machine for mining coal that may eliminate the need for sending men underground, and may do the work of 40 men. . . . New dish for thirsty pets has a mechanism that automatically keeps the water level

constant at a pre-set level in case the pet owner is neglectful. . . . Garden rake with steel spring tines that has an adjustable span ranging from 7½ inches to 22½ inches. Narrow position is for cultivating a small area, wide position is for raking grass.

**CERAMIC TILE** — A government standards committee recently recommended that trade associations promote the formation of independently administered certification programs. By a happy coincidence of timing, one industry almost immediately put into effect a certification plan that had been in preparation for more than two years. The Tile Council of America, whose members produce 90 per cent of this country's ceramic tile, announced the industry's first quality testing and certification program. Tile produced by partici-

pating companies now undergoes continuing inspections by an independent laboratory and must meet or exceed the highest quality standards ever set for the industry before it can carry the Tile Council's triangular mark of certification. These standards are the Commerce Department's Simplified Practice Recommendation R61-61 and Federal Specification SS-T-308b. Quality tests cover size and shape, warping, crazing, water absorption and other characteristics. "From now on, when an architect, contractor or consumer wants to be certain of high quality in ceramic tile, all he need do is to specify Certified Tile," the Council said.

**SCIENCE NEWS** — New found evidence in Arizona indicates that Indians there had an irrigation system for crops 1,900 years ago, antedating

by five to seven centuries the oldest previously known system. Site of the discovery is a reservation where Pima Indians now live. . . . Bank robbery suspect sought since 1961 is nabbed after his picture is relayed by the Early Bird communications satellite. . . . A new chemical has been found to help in drastically reducing the amount of cholesterol in the blood. The product may be one way of preventing heart attacks.

**BITS O' BUSINESS** — Reports that there will be a program of annual excise tax reductions that might in time eliminate the tax on all but a few items, such as liquor, tobacco and highway-user products such as tires and gasoline. Studies are being made of possibly instituting reductions to offset the effects of the large increase in Social Security taxes sched-

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