56-54 ENVIRONMENT
10 TI. YR. 35,000

DEC 1975 CLIPPED BY BACONS

WANDERING CHEMICALS: Salmon contaminated with PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) were caught in Lake Michigan and shipped for canning to Oregon where some of them were seized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. The fish were canned for a California company. An additional 899 cases of contaminated fish were seized in San Francisco, on their way to Puerto Rico. The source of the PCBs is not known. In Columbia, South Carolina, on the evening of May 8, a family ate a meal of barbecued chicken, brown peas, commercially prepared bread, and soft drinks; ten of the eleven family members became ill with nausea, headaches, vomiting, and cramps. The illness lasted for as long as three days. U.S. Communicable Disease Center investigators eventually traced the symptoms to the chemical biphenyl in the bread. Biphenyl, which causes liver and kidney damage in test animals, is used to impregnate paper citrus-fruit wrappers, to kill fungi in the fruit. Its vapors can penetrate the waxed paper wrapping of commercial bread. Extensive investigation failed to reveal when or how the bread became contaminated with biphenyl, however.

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