

## Lethal Nerve Gas Is Now Being Made at Newport Ordnance Plant

CLINTON, Ind., May 15. — (Special.)—Mearlin Sims, plant manager of the F. M. C. installation of the Wabash River Ordnance Works, revealed Monday night at a regular monthly meeting of the Clinton Chamber of Commerce that his company was producing a powerful new nerve gas which would kill a human in minute amounts.

The gas, Sims said, is colorless, odorless and tasteless. It incapacitates by temporarily destroying muscular co-ordination.

Sims also showed chamber members a rocket and a land mine designed as weapons to contain the gas for use against an enemy during war.

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LAST NIGHT was the first official statement about the gas and its manufacture. It was mentioned last year in an article written by a London Daily Express reporter, and flatly denied by officials in Washington and by the Newport Chemical Plant officials. It is not known where the London writer got his information. Mention of the gas was again made last month at an Indiana Safety Council meeting in Indianapolis.

Official clearance for publication, however, was not given.

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until last week, and not until Sims had requested the disclosure as a means of furthering good relations with the community.

There is no danger to the community from the gas, Sims said, nor to those who work at the plant, due to drastic safety measures taken. An employe actually works with the gas only a very short time; and even then he is under constant observation of another employe stationed out of the actual working area.

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SIMS SAID that only short-term contracts are made with the federal government on such chemical products; however, he said that, in his opinion, the plant would continue in operation for four or five more years. He stressed that this was but an assumption on his part.

The plant has been in production for three years. During peak production, approximately 550 persons were employed at the installation. Present employment, Sims said, is about 400. The plant has an annual payroll of about \$2.5 million, and purchases between \$800,000 and \$1 million in supplies each year. It uses about \$15,000 worth of nitro gas per month, most of which is burned in the flame readily seen coming from the tower on the plant site.

Rumors had been circulating in the Clinton area for some time about the mysterious gas being made at the plant. It was to quiet these rumors that the official announcement about the gas was made.