

PARASITE DIGEST ANT'S DIET OF WOOD

The ant who lives on wood doesn't have to digest it, according to studies conducted by L. R. Cleveland at Johns Hopkins University.

In the ant's abdomen is a great hive of primitive animals belonging to the order of protozoa. These take into themselves the wood particles swallowed by the insect and digest them.

Mr. Cleveland killed the protozoa by placing the ants in a temperature of 97 degrees Fahrenheit - seven degrees below the death point by heat of the ant. The ants themselves were not injured by this heating but nevertheless they died within two or three weeks, even when surrounded with plenty of wood. Heated ants that were fed humus, wood rotted or digested by fungi, thrived like normal ants. Their return to good wood digestion went hand in hand with the return of the parasite menagerie to the food tracts.

EARLY INVENTORS HAD THEIR TROUBLES

The trials and difficulties that inventors and discoverers underwent in earlier times before the elaboration of patent and copyright laws, are interestingly illustrated by a resolution recently dug up in the Transactions of the British Royal Society, dating back to 1667. This is believed to be one of the earliest attempts made to protect the rights of prior discovery. It is interesting to note that the safeguard proposed is not one of law, but of secrecy.

The extract follows: "Mention being made, that a security might be provided for such inventions or notions, as ingenious persons might have, or from which being excluded from having a share in them if they should be lighted on by others; it was thought good, if any thing of that nature should be brought in, and desired to be lodged with the society, that, if the authors were not of their body they should be obliged to show it first to the president, and then it should be sealed up both by the small seal of the society, and by the seal of the proposer; but if they were of the society, then they should not be obliged to show it first to the president, but only to declare to him the general heads of the matter, and then it should be sealed up as mentioned before."

FOREST RANGER INVENTS TRAFFIC MEASURING MACHINE

Disgust with routine work is a fertile mother of inventions. A part of the job of C. P. McFarland, forest ranger in the Cascade National Forest, was to keep track of the number of automobiles that traversed the government roads. It was tiresome work, and mechanical. So Mr. McFarland invented a machine to do it. The traffic counter, as he calls his device, is a small platform resting upon springs, buried flush with the track in a narrow place in the road. It is connected by levers to a counting machine on a post. Each car depresses the platform about one-half inch, enough to work the counting machine but not enough to jolt the car.
