ROADS

Wider Roads, More Speed

The old wheeze that a chicken crosses the road because it can't go under it, will meet with stinging rebuke from the judge within twenty years, at least as applied to the human variety, if the hands of collective America remain on the steering wheel. This is the belief of W. C. Markham, executive secretary of the American Association of State Highway Officials, who believes that the increasing congestion on the highways of the country will force some innovations in highway engineering, among them being cross-overs and cross-unders at intersecting points on all important highways and boulevards.

As a prerequisite for concerted action Mr. Markham's organization has the united backing of every state in the Union. Uniform road signs and danger signals have already been officially adopted unanimously for use in every state, and roadside signs such as "Stop—Eat Here" have been outlawed as being inimical to the welfare of the majority.

Roadways 120 feet wide, well lighted at night by electricity or possibly by some method yet to be applied, such as radioactive substance, will, if present trends continue, be policed throughout their entire lengths by "stop" and "go" lights. Instead of speed limits of forty miles per hours it is predicted that all motorists will be required to maintain some minimum figure, such as twenty-five miles per hour; and, failing to do so, they may be arrested for obstructing traffic. A pedestrian who risks his own life and the peace of mind of drivers by crossing opposing traffic may be subject to a sentence in jail if he escapes the morgue.

As partial evidence to support these predictions, it was pointed out that during the past ten years much improvement has become evident in road conditions, and especially in the last few months. The Lincoln highway in Pennsylvania and Indiana is being widened to forty feet; entering Philadelphia the width is fifty-five feet. The Boston post road is being widened to thirty-six feet. Wisconsin and Illinois are building several four-lane pavements, each twenty foot strip being kept within its bounds, preventing cutting-in either from opposing or accompanying traffic.

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PHYSICS

ROBERT WILLIAMS WOOD

Un Homme De Génie

In Dr. Wood one finds the happy combination of scientific ability coupled with remarkable inventiveness and ingenuity, the whole permeated with an intense love of fun. This has made him perhaps the leader of experimental physicists, but it has also found its outlet in another way, which is evident if one compares two of his best known books. One is his "Physical Optics"—a standard treatise on the subject; the other,—"How to Tell the Birds from the Flowers, and Other Wood-Cuts," where, with the aid of his own inimitable drawings, he tells us, for instance, how we may distinguish between the pecan and toucan:

"Very few can
Tell the Toucan
From the Pecan—
Here's a new plan:
To take the Toucan from the tree,
Requires im-mense a-gil-i-tee,
While anyone can pick with ease
The Pecans from the Pecan trees.
It's such an easy thing to do,
That even the Toucan, he can too."

Dr. Wood was born at Concord, Mass., on May 2, 1868. After graduating from Harvard, he studied at Johns Hopkins, Chicago and Berlin, returning to his Baltimore *alma mater* in 1898, where he has been professor of experimental physics since 1901. During the War, as a major in the Signal Officers' Reserve Corps, he aided in scientific work in France.

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FORESTRY—AERONAUTICS

Reforesting By Airplane

New practical uses for airplanes appear on the horizon every day. This time a plane has been pressed into service to help reforest a burned over area of several hundred acres in a forest reserve near Honolulu, Hawaii.

About 700 pounds of forest tree seeds were sowed by airplane in less than an hour over rocky, inaccessible country devastated by recent forest fires that would have required an immense amount of time and labor if done by hand, according to reports from the forestry section of the Territory of Hawaii.

The aerial sowing was of value in getting the burned over area seeded quickly so the young seedlings would have a start ahead of the undesirable weeds and ferns that spring up nearly over night in the tropics.

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METALLURGY

Oil Smelted Copper

The most ancient copper used by man early in the dawn of civilization may have been smelted by the heat of petroleum, one of the most modern of fuels. This is the novel theory advanced by Percy E. Speilmann in a communication to the British scientific journal, *Nature*.

It was nature, rather than man himself, who arranged the smelting. Sir Flinders Petrie, the Egyptian archæologist, recently discovered a remarkable similarity between the description of the Egyptian Paradise described in the "Book of the Dead" and a region along the rivers of the Iora and Kura in the Caucasus. This is supposed to have been the original home of the Egyptians where they learned the working of metals, agriculture, and the writing of language.

In this area petroleum seepages, forming lakes in some cases, exist in close proximity to copper ore, and the theory is that the oil, accidentally fired, smelted the ore so that man coming upon the copper at a later date found it in metallic form.

The most widely accepted theory of the first smelting of copper is that primitive man accidentally brought ore and fuel together in his family campfire, thus becoming an accidental metallurgist.

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The snowshoe rabbit changes its coat from brown to white in winter.