

Planes Displacing Ancient Transport

Aviation

In a matter of months, commercial aviation has made remarkable strides in Mexico and other parts of Latin America.

Small private lines that were plying trade in isolated spots are now linked, and today a net of airways is enmeshing all America very rapidly.

One can fly from the Texas border to the oil fields at Tampico, Tuxpan, or to Mexico City. From Vera Cruz there are lines to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec or to Tapachula on the Guatemalan border, or to Yucatan via the almost unknown coast of Tabasco and Campeche, forgotten since the pirates were driven off the Spanish Main. A branch line from Merida will soon cross Yucatan and Quintana Roo to Cozumel, over territory inhabited by hostile Indians where no one has ever been welcome. The Guatemalan government has a line from Guatemala City to Flores, in the inaccessible Department of Peten, where the Maya Indians from Chichen

Itza took refuge when their empire fell in northern Yucatan.

Mexican airlines from Tapachula in the south will soon be extended to Guatemala City, and mail will go from Texas to Guatemala in twelve hours. From there the Republic of Salvador and the Pacific side of Nicaragua will be linked with the Atlantic side by other units of the Pan-American system. Today one flies from Florida to Santiago, Chile, if one likes, and by fall one will be able to continue the journey across the Andes to Buenos Ayres, if aviation officials' plans come true.

Aviation in the United States, and aviation in the rest of America to the south, are of very different character. In the United States flying has merely supplemented or speeded up already existing excellent means of communication. In Mexico and other parts of Latin America good roads are even scarcer than railroads, and the airplane has jumped a broad gap in the

development of transportation. Airplanes serve where often there has been no other means of communication at all before.

Mexico, like other Latin-American countries, is a living museum demonstrating all stages in the history of transportation. The trimotor plane for Tampico flies overhead following the railroad past Teotihuacan, the ancient Toltec city of pyramids that is a landmark from the air. The tourist's automobile from Mexico City forces the Indian's burro off the village street in modern Teotihuacan.

The burro, loaded out of sight with sacks of charcoal burned in the mountains, is the Spaniard's most human gift to the Indian, and his only beast of burden. Before the burro came to him, as if out of heaven, the Indian carried everything himself, and in the course of thousands of burroless years he had developed the art to a fine point.

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Edison Questionnaire—Continued

discovery or invention do you believe would be the greatest benefit to mankind? Why?"

"If you had been given a certain experiment to perform and had been informed that it could be done successfully, but you had failed ten times, what would you do?"

"If you were to inherit \$1,000,000 within the next year, what would you do with it?"

Part three is the old bugbear that has afflicted everyone who has ever applied for a job or attended business school. "Assuming that you have just graduated from high school and are anxious to land a job, write a letter——" You know the rest of it.

Part four is mostly the test of general information that Mr. Edison has relied on so much in the past. At the end, however, are two posers which do not come under this classification. Volumes might be written about them. Take a long pencil and try it yourself.

"What, in your opinion, should be done to improve the airplane?"

"Do invention and industry promote international agreement?"

Altogether there are 56 questions besides the letter writing test. If each one was answered fully and conscientiously, Mr. Edison should be able to obtain from them a good insight into the

"inner mechanisms" of his applicants.

Yet those familiar with the problem of modern employment procedure would hesitate to use this type of examination as a regular means of selecting men. They would question the possibility, for example, of giving any definite numerical rating to the answers of some of the questions. Suppose one boy thinks the new oil-burning motor is the key to improvement in the airplane. Another believes that a new alloy for making the frame is more important. Who can say which should get the higher mark? And how much higher?

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"PFS" for "SS"

Navigation

Manufacturers of powdered fuel systems for ocean vessels have proposed that the prefix "PFS" should be used instead of "SS" with the name of a steamer using powdered coal as fuel. The builders of motor ships already have substituted the letters "MV" for the famous "SS" on their ships.

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Canada is now shipping muskrats for breeding purposes to France, Great Britain, Germany, and Czechoslovakia.

Chameleonic Fence Post

Chemistry

A man's puzzlement over a fence post which he had painted black but which turned white every night was the starting point of a program of research which has culminated in the discovery of a number of chemicals having this remarkable chameleon-like property scientifically termed phototropy. Information regarding these chemicals has now been made public by the American Chemical Society.

The famous fence post was painted with a "pigment having a zinc basis." It would turn black soon after sunrise each morning, only to turn white again when darkness came. Many explanations have been given for the phenomenon, but scientists are not yet agreed as to the cause of it. They have, however, found several other substances besides the zinc sulfide, which was in the paint on the post, that will also change color with the light.

Most of the known phototropic liquids are solutions of colorless derivatives of certain dyes. The solutions are practically colorless in the dark, but turn the color of the parent dye when exposed to light.

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Government leather specialists state that our domestic hide supply is falling shorter and shorter of meeting the leather requirements of the country.