

ENTOMOLOGY

Yearly Food Bill of Insects Could Build Whole New Fleet

MORE THAN nine hundred million dollars—enough to replace every battleship in the U. S. Navy with a brand new \$40,000,000 dreadnought and have quite a lot left over for cruisers—is the annual food bill of the major insect pests of the United States.

This staggering sum has been totaled by J. A. Hyslop of the Bureau of Entomology, U. S. Department of Agriculture, out of estimates of damage done by 34 of the more important of the many-legged enemies of man's crops, forests and manufactured products. This estimate covers only a small number of species, though it does include the most harmful ones. But there are now about 6,000 species of insects on record as of economic importance, though many of them do little damage.

The biggest single item in the damage done by insects is charged up to the cotton boll weevil. Its dinner check comes to \$164,500,000, nearly enough in one year to pay for all the "treaty cruisers" that Uncle Sam expects to build. The cotton boll worm is another terrific offender, scoring second with a damage of \$104,000,000 per year. This is not all wreaked on cotton, however, for under the alias of corn ear worm the same insect raids our most important cereal crop, and it also throws tobacco and tomatoes for a loss.

None of the other insect species does damage running up to nine figures, though there are eighteen of them that get into the eight-figure class, ranging from the spruce budworm at \$71,400,000 down to the clothes moth, whose larvae defy all the ill smells that man can marshal against them, to the tune of \$10,800,000.

Our vanishing forests, yearly scored by devastating fires, have the invisible fires of hungry insect appetites constantly raging against them. Including the damage done by spruce budworms, insects attacking forest products, bark-beetles and miscellaneous leaf-eating pests, the total losses to forests and forest products amount yearly to \$138,300,000. This figure, however, does not include termite damage which is wrought principally on standing buildings or piled lumber. The termites, or "white

ants," account for \$29,290,000 worth of ruin every year.

What insects do to corn, wheat, oats and other grains in storage is estimated only in the most general way. A round figure of \$50,000,000 a year is given. The same figure is set for the losses due to grasshoppers, locusts, crickets and their kin, making a total of a hundred-million-dollar tax on the national bakers' bill collected by the principal enemies of grain.

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BOTANY

Redwood Heart-Rot Caused by New Fungus

REDWOOD lumber can be largely saved from the destructive fungus that causes brown heart-rot by the simple expedient of rolling the sections of

a trunk apart after it has been sawed into short logs. This fungus gets its start in dim, damp cracks like those left by a crosscut saw, Prof. Emanuel Fritz of the University of California has discovered.

Although the disease has been known for a long time, and has been traced to a fungus, the causal organism could not be identified because its fruiting bodies had never been found. Prof. Fritz discovered these in saw kerfs between logs, in rift cracks in lumber, and in the hollow butts of trees.

Science News Letter, May 23, 1931

ARCHITECTURE

Architects Examine Thoroughly Modern Home

A TYPE of home that makes full use of the latest modern inventions is pictured below as it was shown at the biennial Architectural and Allied Arts Exposition in New York. (SNL Apr. 25, '31). Its walls are open in places to reveal the interior construction.

In spite of its bare, metallistic appearance, the house is designed to be convenient, comfortable and healthful. The construction is mainly of glass, alumi-



A FUTURE HOME LAID BARE BEFORE ARCHITECTS