

## RADIO

**Government Listening Posts Record Foreign Propaganda**

**G**OVERNMENT listening posts, where a continual watch of foreign short-wave radio broadcasts will be kept, are being established by the Federal Communications Commission and the Defense Communications Board.

To make sure that no subversive propaganda is missed, a staff of 350 technicians, translators, clerks, analysts and other experts will work in eight-hour shifts. Recordings will be made at the field stations, and the records sent to Washington for further study. Since three-quarters of these broadcasts are in foreign languages, it requires an average of seven hours' translation and study for each hour of broadcast.

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## ASTRONOMY

**"Meteor" in Photograph Was Really an Airplane**

**W**HAT Dr. Fred L. Whipple, astronomer at Harvard College Observatory and expert in meteors, recently thought was a rare photograph, turned out to be something quite different.

Hundreds of millions of these "shooting stars," as meteors are commonly called, enter the atmosphere of the earth daily, but only rarely does a camera happen to be pointed to the part of the sky where one appears. As part of a program of study, Harvard astronomers regularly set up photographic traps to catch them.

Similar cameras at the observatory headquarters in Cambridge, and the observatory at Oak Ridge, Mass., 25 miles away, are regularly directed to the same part of the heavens. When they record a meteor, the trail is against a different background of stars in the two pictures. From this displacement the height can be figured, a matter of fifty miles or more.

According to *The Telescope*, illustrated magazine published at the Harvard Observatory by the Bond Astronomical Club, the other day Dr. Whipple noticed what seemed to be a meteor trail on two plates, both of which were exposed at Cambridge, in cameras a few feet apart. Just out of curiosity, he measured the plate. The "meteor" was only a thousand feet overhead!

This would have been most sensational, except for the fact that it wasn't a

meteor at all, but an airplane. The red light on the plane failed to record on the blue sensitive plate, only the green light made the trail.

So now the Harvard astronomers are wondering how in the future, on single exposures, they can tell a shooting star from an airplane.

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## PSYCHOLOGY

**Research in Aviation Psychology Being Surveyed**

**D**ISCOVERIES made by scientists in the psychology of aviation have been dug out of dusty archives, abstracted, classified and indexed ready for the instant use of Army, Navy and civil aviation officials by WPA workers in New York.

Altogether 10,000 research studies have been brought to light in this survey, which was made at the request of Dr. Dean Brimhall, director of research of the Civil Aeronautics Authority.

The WPA, in its Psychological Index project, has been making an index of titles of psychological research reports. Using this as a starting point, Prof. G. H. S. Razran, of Queens College, selected all the titles which concerned aviation psychology, hunted up the research reports, and prepared abstracts of them. Hitherto this work has been lost to scientists working in this field in connection with the defense program because there has been no way of tracing it through any index.

WPA workers have continued this work and it is hoped that they may be assigned to follow up this study and keep this indexing and abstracting service up-to-the minute for defense coordination of research.

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## HORTICULTURE

**Mildew-Proof Climber Rose Named For Stephen Foster**

**S**TEPHEN FOSTER, writer of many of America's favorite songs, is commemorated in the naming of a new hybrid climbing rose, with fine red flowers, which was originated at the University of Arkansas by Prof. H. R. Rosen. (*Science*, March 14) The new variety is highly resistant to powdery mildew, fungus disease that ruins many climbing roses, and it can also withstand severe winter cold.

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## PHYSICS

**Simple Altimeter for Auto Is Now on the Market**

**A** SIMPLE altimeter for automobiles has been introduced, which attaches either to the windshield molding or the center post. It comes in three models, intended for different ranges of height. One reads up to 5000 feet in 100-foot divisions, the second to 10,000 feet with the same fineness, and the third, for really high country, to 15,000 feet, in 200-foot divisions. (*Taylor Instrument Co.*)

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## MEDICINE

**British Students Will Complete Training Here**

**S**OMETIME this spring a group of English medical students, whose studies were interrupted by German bombs that destroyed schools and hospitals, will arrive in the United States. They will be the first contingent of the group whom the Rockefeller Foundation will help to finish their studies in American and Canadian medical schools.

The plan for this type of aid to Britain was announced by Raymond B. Fosdick, president of the Rockefeller Foundation. The Foundation has appropriated \$100,000 to start the plan, which developed from a suggestion made, just before he died, by Lord Lothian, then British Ambassador to the United States.

After completion of their studies, the students will return to England. Some of the 25 leading medical schools in the United States and Canada which have readily agreed to accept these students have offered to remit their tuition. A possible extension of the plan will be considered if the first year's experience is successful.

Efforts to salvage as much as possible of the world's productive scholarship by aid to refugee scholars of continental Europe, begun by the Foundation in 1933, continues. During the year 1940, 56 refugee scholars received grants totaling \$266,350.

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# CE FIELDS

## ANTHROPOLOGY

### Java Ape-Man Discoverer Reported To Be Dead

DR. EUGENE DUBOIS, famous for his discovery, 50 years ago, of the first-found skull of the Java ape-man, *Pithecanthropus erectus*, died in December at his home in the Netherlands, it is stated in mailed reports belatedly reaching here by way of Germany and England. Dr. Dubois was 82 years of age.

Dr. Dubois achieved fame in 1891, when he discovered the top of a remarkable skull apparently intermediate between ape and man, together with two molar teeth and a thighbone, in a river gravel stratum near Trinil, in Java, where he was serving as an army surgeon. Subsequently, he returned to the University of Leyden, in the Netherlands where he spent much of his time until his death in research on his sensational and much-discussed fossil finds.

In recent years four additional *Pithecanthropus* finds have been made, principally through the activities of Dr. G. H. R. von Koenigswald. Two of these, including one of a juvenile skull, are accepted only tentatively, states Dr. Ales Hrdlicka of the U. S. National Museum; the other two, however, are considered undoubtedly authentic.

*Science News Letter, April 5, 1941*

## PHYSICS

### With a Fourth on Defense, Need Still More Physicists

EVEN though about a quarter of the nation's physicists are now working on problems of national defense, still more are needed. The situation is made difficult by the fact that a large number of graduate students now studying are in danger of being drafted, which threatens to reduce to half the number of 130 per year who have recently been completing their studies.

These facts are contained in the report of Dr. Henry A. Barton, director of the American Institute of Physics, to the governing board of the Institute. (*Science*, March 21.)

Dr. Barton estimates that 1,400 physicists are now engaged in defense prob-

lems of various kinds. Some are actually with the navy, army, air corps and other government departments, while others are in industries, or are performing defense research tasks in their own laboratories. There are between 4,000 and 6,000 physicists in the United States, depending on how one defines the word. There are 4,100 who are members of at least one of the national professional societies in physics.

Since the training of a physicist requires three to four years of graduate study, he said, it is nearly impossible to increase quickly their numbers. Every effort should be made to keep up training for these students despite the fact that many are unmarried and of draft age. The problem is further complicated by the fact that many of the best teachers have themselves been called away from their classrooms.

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## GENERAL SCIENCE

### Destruction of Collections Makes Ours More Valuable

DESTRUCTION, scattering and isolation, brought by war to the principal scientific collections of the Old World, enhance the importance of similar collections in American museums and universities. The 17 million specimens in the Smithsonian Institution's natural history collections, comprising everything from pressed wildflowers to human skulls, take on increased significance as scholars become unable to travel abroad in normal fashion.

When a scientist discovers a new species of plant or animal, he deposits a representative specimen—usually the first specimen collected—in one of the larger museums. This is known as the type specimen. It is used for comparison with other specimens collected later, to make absolutely certain of their identity.

Many of the type specimens in Old World collections have already been destroyed; others have been removed and hidden in safe places. But even where they have thus escaped destruction they are not at present available for study. Furthermore, practically all important collections in continental Europe are out of reach of American and British scientists, as the collections in Britain and America are unavailable to Continental scholars.

In this confused and abnormal world, the scientific collections in American museums and universities constitute oases in a flaming desert of war.

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## ARCHAEOLOGY

### Big Tower of Jerusalem's Third Wall Unearthed

ARCHAEOLOGISTS digging in Jerusalem have discovered a remarkably large tower of the famous Third Wall, built to fortify the city soon after Christ's death, is the report which has just reached the American Friends of the Hebrew University in New York.

The tower, 65 feet long and 24 feet wide, and a new section of the buried wall have come to light in excavations which Prof. L. A. Mayer and Prof. E. L. Sukenik of the Hebrew University are making in cooperation with the American School of Oriental Research.

The line of the ancient fortifications of the Holy City has been traced across the grounds that now belong to the American School's buildings, in northern Jerusalem. The new finds mark the eastern limit of the wall and indicate its turn southward close to the slope of the Kedron Valley.

Great importance is attached by Bible scholars to each new revelation of the route of the ancient walls of Jerusalem, for the help the walls may afford in precisely locating famous sites. The first wall was built by King David and Solomon. The second was the wall of Christ's day. The third, now being studied, was built by the Jewish King Herod Agrippa to enclose a large area north of the older city.

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## ORNITHOLOGY

### Outbreak of Pigeon Malaria Occurs in California

PIGEON MALARIA, hitherto unknown in California though present in other parts of the country, has been discovered on a Southern California squab farm by Prof. Carl G. Kadner of Loyola University. (*Science*, March 21) Prof. Kadner states that the parasites causing the disease were found when he was asked to examine squabs that showed signs of unthriftiness. Extent of the outbreak is not known, and a survey is in progress.

Pigeon malaria, which is capable of causing serious losses to commercial squab farms, is transmitted through the bite of a species of bloodsucking fly of foreign origin, which got into the United States in 1896 and is now distributed throughout the southern states and in California.

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