CONSERVATION

NATURE RAMBLINGS

by Frank Thone

Changed Ways

QUINAULT salmon have been running up the same river in the Pacific Northwest for unknown centuries. For unknown centuries, Indians living on the bank of the river have been trapping the big fish, in highly effective weirs of their own devising. These fish-traps could easily have wiped out the run entirely, says Clifford C. Presnall of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, yet they have not done so. Only since the coming of the white man has the danger to the Quinault salmon become real.

The story of the primitive state of balance between Indians and fish is a relatively simple one. Effective though the fish-trapping weirs were, they were not permitted to operate all the time. This was not because the Indians had any notion of conservation, but just because they had the normal human amount of laziness. It took a lot of work to fashion a weir out of willow twigs tied together with larch roots. The violent waters of a flood could easily tear to pieces the product of many hours of labor. So the Indians used to leave the weirs in position during the low water only. When a flood began they would take them out of the stream bed, to replace them after the water had subsided. During the flood the salmon continued their upstream migration, and enough of them reached headwaters to insure maintenance of the salmon run at high level.

When the white man came, setting up big canneries, the picture was radically altered. Before that, the only use the Indian had for salmon was to eat them himself. After he had supplied his immediate needs, and smoked enough more for use until the next season's catch came in, there was no point in taking any more. But the white man was willing to pay the Indian for as many fish as he cared to bring in. Furthermore, he had things to sell; interesting new gadgets to use or wear, and even more interesting stuff to drink.

So the Indian had an incentive to leave his weirs in the water longer than he had been used to doing. Also, with materials purchased from the white man, he could make his fishing a great deal more efficient. So Indian over-fishing, together with other factors, especially stream pollution, has begun to present some worrisome problems to conservationists.

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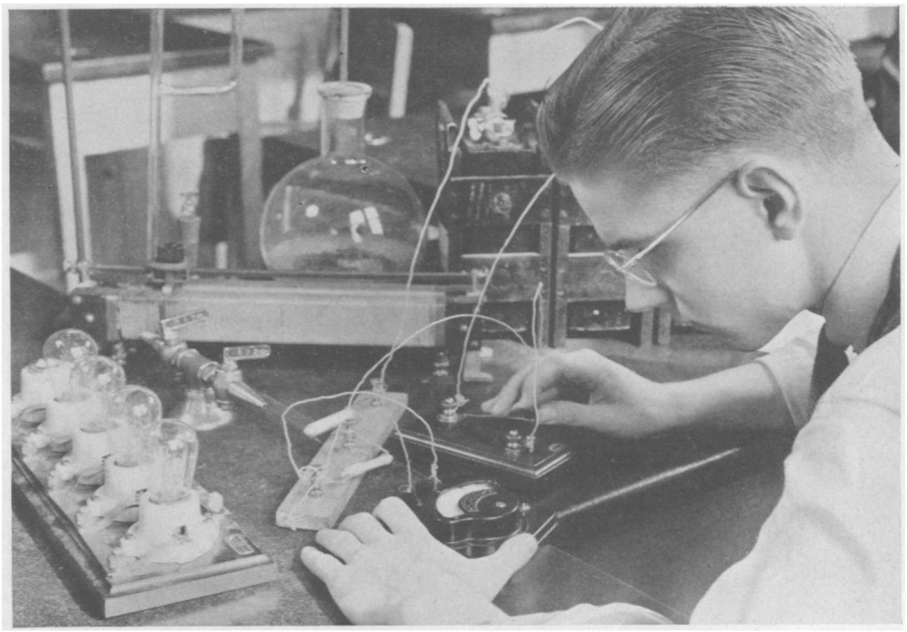

LEARNING CODE

Boys in the physics department of Monroe High School, Rochester, N. Y., are learning telegraphy and radio operation so as to prepare themselves to serve their country. The Signal Corps of the U. S. Army is glad to have intelligent boys train themselves in this field.

SCIENCE CLUBS OF AMERICA

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NEWS OF CLUBS

FLEETWOOD, Pa.—Members of the Fleetwood High School Science Club, are learning, at the local Weather Observatory, how weather forecasts are made. Members also are studying aviation at the Transport Field in Reading. These activities fit right in to the National Defense Program and should be helpful in the immediate future.

NEWARK, N. J.—Members of the Explorers Club at Barringer High School Annex are building model airplanes and making models to demonstrate scientific principles. Other activities include chemical demonstrations, a photographic contest, science talks by members and excursions to places of scientific interest. The sponsor is Morris Allan Brinn, teacher of general science.

YOUNGSTOWN, Ohio—Members of the East Electrons of East High School are busy selecting items to exhibit at the Fifth Annual Science Fair to be held in April. Individual and group experiments and demonstrations by members on current scientific subjects are given at meetings of the club which is sponsored by Roy B. Stine, head of the science department.

BELLEFONTAINE, Ohio—Before the summer vacations start members of the General Science Club of Bellefontaine High School expect to be able to identify easily many birds and rocks. As a matter of fact the program calls for identification of 100 birds and 100 different rocks and minerals. A third project upon which the club is now working is to demonstrate the value to the scientist of the camera and photography. All three projects are, in our opinion, very much worth while.

Clubs are invited to become affiliated with SCA for a nominal $2 for 20 members or less. You can become an associate of SCA for 25 cents. Address: Science Clubs of America, 1719 N St., N.W., Washington, D. C.