

facturing Company (*Journal of Experimental Medicine*, July).

When a typhoid fever germ is mixed with silver nitrate, the flagella which serve the germ as propellers are completely destroyed, the electron microscope revealed. The protoplasm, which is the very life of the cell, is stained black, but the wall of the cell is apparently unaffected. The entire germ is very much smaller, as if shrunken.

When the typhoid fever germ is mixed with lead acetate, however, the flagella, though darkened, are not destroyed. The germ swells, however, and its protoplasm escapes its wall to form a halo around it.

Differences in action of lead, silver, nickel and mercury salts were also observed on cholera and dysentery germs and on a microorganism called *Fusobacterium*.

*Science News Letter, July 11, 1942*

## ENGINEERING

## Automobile of the Future Will Be Lighter and Cheaper

Weight Would Be Reduced as Much as 1,000 Pounds; Eventually Engine May Be Placed in the Rear

WHEN the cessation of hostilities at last permits the manufacture of automobiles to be resumed, the new cars will be smaller, lighter, lower, cheaper and more economical than present ones, and some radical new designs with engine in the rear may be seen.

This is the consensus of engineering opinion as gathered by Frank Jardine, chief engineer of the Castings Division of the Aluminum Company of America (*Society of Automotive Engineers Journal*, July).

The first post-war autos, he warned however, will probably be similar to the 1942 models, and more expensive. Time will be required to develop the drastically changed new models, and meanwhile parts, tools and machinery already on hand will have to be used. Nor may we expect new cars to run off the assembly line the moment hostilities cease. Time is also required to change from war-time to peace-time production.

Here are some of the ideas of automotive engineers regarding the future car. But Mr. Jardine also warns that future events may require some considerable revision of present day ideas.

While everyone was agreed that the new cars would be cheaper, there was much variation as to actual prices. In the low price range, the average was \$700 for a car that would do 30 miles on a gallon of gas. The larger cars averaged \$2,000 and 20 miles to a gallon of gas. These economies would be required to offset higher gas taxes. Regular fuel would be 80-octane, premium fuel 100-octane.

Weight of the cars would be reduced

by as much as 1,000 pounds in some cases without reducing size.

The engineers believed that there would be extensive use of substitute materials developed during the war, with savings in weight and cost and in many instances with mechanical improvement. Increased production of aluminum and magnesium would permit greater use of these light-weight materials. Plastic windshields curved at the corner posts will permit better seeing. Tires will be about the same but may be of synthetic or natural rubber.

Hydraulic drives and brakes, automatic transmissions and overdrive will definitely appear on all but the low-priced models.

Engines will be smaller and lighter in weight. Carburetors will probably not be changed, but superchargers and fuel-injection systems may be developed. Eventually the engine may be placed in the rear.

These are some of the specifications for the future car as dreamed by present-day engineers, but subject to future revision.

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## ANTHROPOLOGY

## Anthropological Bases Lacking for "Race" Claims

RACIAL claims made for propaganda purposes lack any semblance of biological or anthropological basis, Dr. John R. Swanton, veteran anthropologist of the Bureau of American Ethnology, indicates in a new publication of the Smithsonian Institution.

Even the earliest nations, like Egypt and Babylonia, show no absolute uniformity in racial types, says Dr. Swanton. They were at least two distinct physical types in ancient Egypt in addition to the Mediterranean type commonly thought of as representing the Egyptian "race." As for modern Germany, few of the larger nations of history have less title to a mystical national unity, despite the vehemence of Nazi claims.

On the other side of the picture, Dr. Swanton finds racially homogenous groups of people who never achieved common nationality or political organization. It was so to a considerable extent in ancient Greece; even more so among some tribes of recent Indians on this continent. New England and New York Indians were very much alike physically, yet they had widely divergent tribal organizations and even radically different languages.

"In short," says Dr. Swanton, "there is no one universally valid principle identifying a body of people as a tribe, and tribes or tribal groups varied so enormously as to dispose effectually of the idea that there was an immutability about them, either in their origin or later development. Sanctions of supernatural character were claimed in the more developed tribes such as the Natchez, Aztecs and Incas, but these were plainly afterthoughts intended to stabilize a condition brought about by less occult means."

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## NUTRITION

## Dehydrated Beef Now in Production for Lend-Lease

DEHYDRATION, the process that makes one ship do the work of half-a-dozen or more in getting vegetables, eggs and milk overseas, is now at work on meat as well, announces Secretary of Agriculture Claude R. Wickard. Experiments have been under way for some time, and the technique has progressed far enough to justify its use with beef. Experimental work on pork dehydration is still in progress, and is regarded as promising.

The beef is ground before dehydration, so that the product, after "re-hydration," is most suitable for meat loaf, meat pie and croquettes. A coarser grind gives meat suitable for stews. The product is reduced about three-fourths in weight, and about one-half in bulk.

At present production is limited.

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