they have acquired sufficient strength for sustained flight. Before that, even though an adult would probe a blossom only a few feet away, the fledglings still made no attempt to search the flowers.

Only upon tasting the food can they decide whether or not they want it. Most hummingbirds prefer syrup made with white sugar, provided the solution is not too dilute. Commercial honey ranks next, but instead of taking long drinks, the birds only sip the honey-and-water mixture. Brown-sugar syrup is least desired, and salt water refused.

Several nasturtium blossoms with some of the spurs clipped were placed by Mr. Bene over the mouths of small vials and one ounce wine glasses filled with honey or brown-sugar syrup. When the vials were hidden in the nasturtium beds so that the flower decoys could not be distinguished from genuine nasturtium blooms, the birds were surprised to discover the abundance of sweets they held. Thereafter these blossoms were sought in the nasturtium beds, the birds flying straight to the decoy.

A hummingbird can discriminate the color, taste and form of flowers, Mr. Bene believes, and through association learn to recognize and locate them.

Having once associated a place with a specific source of food, hummingbirds will return to the site although the food source has been removed. Apparently only one visit is enough for them to remember a place, a five-year-study of black-chinned hummingbirds showed.

Science News Letter, June 9, 1945

GENERAL SCIENCE

Soviet Science Celebration

A group of American scientists will attend the 220th anniversary of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., June 15 to 28.

➤ A GROUP of American scientists will attend the 220th anniversary celebration of the Academy of Sciences of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to be held in Moscow and Leningrad, June 15 to 28.

Signalizing the return of scientific interchanges between the Soviet Union at peace and the United States, the visits of American scientists are expected to aid in the establishment of even closer relations in the coming months.

The American scientists will be the guests of the Soviet government and will fly to Moscow.

Science News Letter, June 9, 1945

Academy Celebration Includes Popular Festival

By IVAN KUZNETSOV

Soviet Scientist Antifascist Committee Writer

➤ The 220th anniversary celebration of the Soviet Academy of Sciences to be held late in June will, in addition to meetings, include a popular festival honoring the scientists of the U.S.S.R. and what they have done to serve their nation in peace and war.

The academy consists now of 145 academicians, including some of the leading figures in Soviet science, among them Dr. V. Komarov, botanist, who is president, Dr. P. Kapitsa, physicist, Dr. N. Semenov, chemist, Dr. I. Vinogradov, mathematician, Dr. I. Orbeli, physiologist, and Dr. N. Burdenko, surgeon.

Fifty-seven institutes or sections equivalent to institutes are operated by the Soviet Academy today, with a total staff of more than 5,000 scientific and technical workers. The work is divided into eight departments: Physics and mathematics, chemistry, geology and geography, biology, technology, history and philosophy, economics and law, literature and language.

The academy is the guiding body in all Soviet research work and it is a sort of general headquarters for science where fundamental problems are studied.

Differing from foreign scientific bodies in organization and work as well as size, the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences is directly responsible to the Council of the People's Commissars. It renders an annual account of its work to the Council. The chief function of the academy is to promote pure and applied science in the U.S.S.R. and to study and develop achievements in world science. A fundamental task given the academy is to "apply all scientific achievements to the work of building up a new socialist classless society."

The academy was founded in 1725 by Peter the Great and soon became Russia's authoritative scientific body. Most of the leading Russian scientists have been members, including Lomonosov, father of Russian science, the biologist Kovalevsky, the chemist Butlerov, the mathematicians Ostrogradsky, Chebyshev and Markov, and the physiologist Pavlov.

In 1725 the academy had 15 members and a hundred years later there were 22. In 1916, shortly before the revolution, there were 47 members and in 1925 when the 200th anniversary was celebrated there were 48 members.

Science News Letter, June 9, 1945

PUBLIC HEALTH

Suicide Rate in Germany Double What It Is in the U. S.

➤ IF MANY Nazi leaders killed themselves as some reports indicate, they followed a tendency that is much stronger in Europe than it is in the United States.

The suicide rate in Germany in 1936, the last year for which any reliable figures are available, was 28.6 per 100,000 population—just double the rate for the same year in the United States, 14.3.

The only European countries with suicide rates lower than that of the United States in that year were the Netherlands, with a rate of 8.1; England and Wales, 12.3; Romania, 10.5; Norway, 6.3; Eire, 3.3; and Italy, 7.9. It is believed that the low rate in Eire and Italy may be accounted for by the large Catholic population; the Catholic teachings are very strong with regard to suicide and burial in consecrated ground is refused to those who are known to have deliberately killed themselves.

If the effect of war is the same in Germany as it generally is in other countries, however, it is probable that the suicide rate is lower there now than it was in 1936. The first World War caused a drop in the German suicide rate. From a rate of 23.1 per 100,000 in 1913, it dropped to only 15.3 in 1918.

The U. S. suicide rate has dropped in the present war to 10.2 in 1943, the latest available Census Bureau figure.

Japan, contrary to popular belief due to the practice there of the traditional hara-kiri, has only a moderate suicide rate. In 1936, the rate was only 22.0 per 100,000. The rate in Austria was 40.2.

But even in countries where the suicide rate is highest, self-murder does not compare as a cause of death with the most serious diseases. The U. S. death rate from cancer in 1936 was 111.4.

Science News Letter, June 9, 1945