Do You Know?

The *magpie* is a natural thief; shiny objects are preferred by this bird.

Juice from sound oranges only should be used if it is to be preserved by freezing.

Gray-white *feathers* on the bald eagle's head give the appearance of baldness, but the bird is not bald.

Because of a shortage of *iron* scrap used in making steel, iron ore is now being charged into the open hearth to promote chemical reactions.

Soybean oil can now be successfully extracted in a pilot plant by an alcohol extraction process; a commercial plant to use this method is planned.

Furfural, a chemical little known three decades ago but now widely used for many purposes, is made largely today from corncobs, still a farm waste.

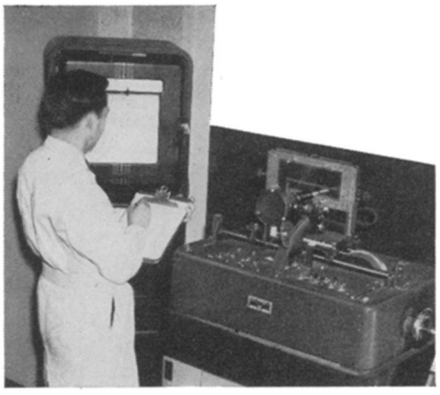

Photo Courtesy Koppers Co., Inc., American Hammered Piston Ring Div.

Spectrograms "Write" Their Analyses With A Knorr-Albers Microphotometer

Spectrographic analysis is speeded by a Knorr-Albers Microphotometer, particularly when:

1. Spectrograms contain lines of unknown metals.
2. Comparatively large number of lines is present in spectrogram.
3. Record of lines is wanted.

For details see illustrated Catalog E-90(1).

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GENERAL SCIENCE

Physics, Chemistry Lead With Top Young Scientists

➤ PHYSICS AND CHEMISTRY are the leading choices for major subjects among the brightest science-minded young men and women in this country, as measured by returns on a questionnaire sent to all the contestants in the Science Talent Search conducted by Science Service and the Westinghouse Educational Foundation annually since 1942. Among the 1,800 who have been chosen, (300 each year) as the honors group, a majority favors physics. The balance among the other contestants is slightly in favor of chemistry.

Among the men in the honors group, the physical sciences are definitely favored. This probably has a good deal to do with the total result, since male contestants have consistently been a little more than twice as numerous as female.

Another favored field of choice is medicine. More than 70% of the men who designated this as their choice are now carrying on premedical or medical studies. Young women who indicated the same choice have to a considerable extent decided finally on nursing. Between one-third and one-half of those who were medically minded are in nurses' training schools; less than a tenth are actually heading for the M. D. degree.

Biology, the social sciences and non-science fields have claimed relatively few of the men—only 1% to 4%—but more of the women, with the social sciences as their heaviest choice in this group.

The war, by calling many of the men into armed services, and only a few of the women, has made a really satisfactory comparative study rather difficult. However, the men are back in college now, many of them under the G.I. Bill of Rights, and they are rapidly making up for lost time.

One incidental thing the study disclosed: the brighter the student the more likely he is to answer a questionnaire about himself. A higher percentage of the honors group returned their blanks than of the non-honors group. It must be emphasized, too, that this is not a comparison between bright students and dull ones: practically everyone on the list, non-honors as well as honors, came from the top 20% of their high school graduating classes.

These and other facts about the Science Talent Search "alumni" have come out of a ten-year study that is being conducted by Dr. Harold A. Edgerton of Ohio State University and Dr. Steuart H. Britt of McCann-Erickson, New York, psychologists who prepare the examinations and assist in the final judging of the contestants.

Science News Letter, June 14, 1947

ORNITHOLOGY

Talkative Raven Is Very Wise Bird

➤ THE TALKATIVE raven, rather than the taciturn owl, is given credit for being a wise bird by Arthur Cleveland Bent of Taunton, Mass., U. S. National Museum Associate, in a new publication issued by the Smithsonian Institution.

"The raven," says Mr. Bent, "is one of our most sagacious birds—crafty, resourceful, adaptable, and quick to learn and profit by experience."

Impossible to approach ordinarily, the bird makes itself at home around seacoast villages in northern latitudes, where its services as a scavenger are appreciated. From Pennsylvania southward it is a mountain bird, seldom seen below an altitude of 3,000 feet.

It has a considerable vocabulary of calls. Most frequently heard is a hollow laugh: "haw-haw-haw-haw." On the wing it sounds off with loud "crawks", interspersed with occasional more musical notes. It sometimes goes "thung!" like a big tuning-fork, and it also has a metallic, tinkling song resembling that of the red-winged blackbird but much louder. Finally, it can imitate the calls of a number of other birds, such as geese and gulls.

Ravens like to talk to themselves, says Mr. Bent, sometimes keeping it up by the hour. So absorbed do they become in these soliloquies that they often relax their watchfulness, letting an observer approach much closer than they usually permit.

Science News Letter, June 14, 1947

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

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