

ZOOLOGY

London Ape Makes Sketch

Simian artists in England and India give hints of possible origin of human art. Companions show interest in outline drawings made with twig or finger-tip.

➤ WERE THERE artists before there were human beings? News that apes and monkeys do things that might be interpreted as the beginnings of drawing is brought by the British journal, *Nature* (June 6).

A solitary simian practitioner of "art for art's sake" was observed in the London Zoo by its director, Dr. Julian S. Huxley. He was watching a young gorilla in a cage illuminated with a strong electric light, that cast the animal's shadow on a white wall.

"Seeing his shadow before him at one moment, he stopped, looked at it, and proceeded to trace its outline with its forefinger."

Another scientist, with Dr. Huxley at the moment, agreed that the action was deliberate. The young ape repeated his finger-tip "sketch" twice more, then

went on with his play. He was never seen to do it again, though he was often watched.

Dr. Huxley's communication came to the attention of J. Leonard Bowen of Port Sunlight, Cheshire, England, who reported a similar observation which he made while in India some years ago. Only in this instance the animals were long-tailed wild monkeys playing in the open. And they functioned as artists with an audience—perhaps the first art critics.

"Large numbers of large long-tailed monkeys romp about the little hill station of Matheran, near Bombay, and afford much amusement to visitors," reports Mr. Bowen. "I frequently saw such monkeys trace the outline of one of their hands in the dust, using a twig held almost as one would hold a pencil. Other monkeys inspected the

traced outlines with a show of interest, walking round and round the spot with what seemed to be an anxious manner."

Science News Letter, August 29, 1942

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING

Build Powerful Electron Whirler and X-Ray Machine

➤ A MASSIVE CONCRETE building with walls three feet thick has been constructed in Schenectady to house what will be by far the world's most powerful X-ray machine, now being built by the General Electric Company. The building was inspected by the National Inventors Council, under guidance of Dr. William D. Coolidge, Director of Research and a member of the Council.

The new machine will whirl electrons up to an energy of 100,000,000 volts, and produce X-rays of like power. It is similar to the 20,000,000-volt machine built by GE last year with the assistance of Dr. Donald W. Kerst of the University of Illinois, its original inventor.

A special use of the machine, which may be completed before the end of this year, will be to determine the maximum thickness of armor plate to which X-rays can be usefully applied. Eight inches is the limit of the present 1,000,000-volt outfits, but the much thicker plates used on battleships require examination. The new machine, which will give voltages from 1,000,000 to 100,000,000, will accomplish this.

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MEDICINE

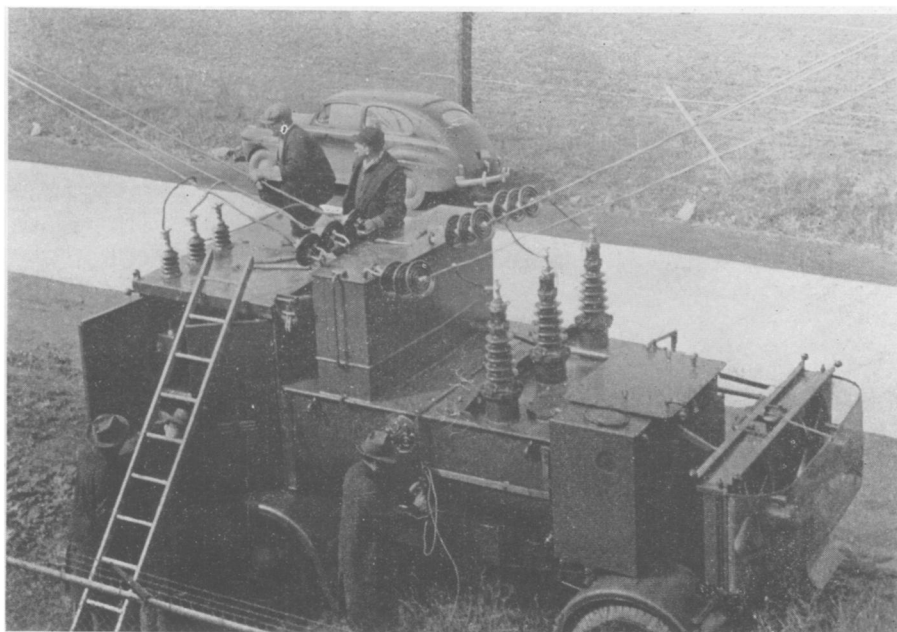
U. S. Lacks Women Doctors; Blamed On Prejudice

➤ NOW THAT women doctors are so desperately needed to free men for military service and to take over civilian medical requirements, the nation finds itself with only a handful of women physicians and surgeons, says Dr. R. R. Spencer, of the National Institute of Health (*War Medicine*, July).

While the policy of discouraging women from entering medical schools has been "short-sighted and ungenerous, this is no time for postmortems," says Dr. Spencer. He urges that college women with special aptitudes in the biologic sciences be encouraged to study medicine.

After the war women will be filling key medical posts now held by men, as consultants in industrial hygiene, directors of public health services, surgeons and research directors, predicts Dr. Spencer.

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MOBILE SUBSTATIONS for emergency electric service in war and peace or for temporary use, are now produced by General Electric. Installation is merely a matter of parking, grounding the unit, elevating the switch structure, and making the necessary wire connections. In event of bomb damage the substation is towed quickly from place to place. The unit pictured can step down 33,000 volts to 4,330 volts.