

ZOOLOGY
**NATURE
 RAMBLINGS**
by Frank Thone



Gathering into Barns

➤ AT HARVEST time, we are apt to become a bit satisfied with ourselves, regarding man as the only creature that looks toward the future and seeks security against its chances by laying in supplies. Yet a moment's looking about will dispel this mistaken pride, for the world is full of other beings that also gather into barns.

Rodents as a class offer numerous interesting examples of this hoarding habit. Squirrels lay up stores of nuts and grain, beavers stock their ponds with sticks bearing tasty bark, certain wild mice lay by quantities of seeds, and the pika or little chief hare of the Rocky Mountains cures hay and packs it away in his rock-crevice home.

Birds are not often thought of as hoarders; indeed, they are cited in the New Testament parable as among the creatures that take no thought for the morrow. Yet a few of them do store food. The habit of the shrike or butcher-bird, of hanging his victims on thorns or the prongs of barbed-wire fences, is not a torturer's trick, as has been widely believed, but only a bit of packing-plant technique. California woodpeckers wedge acorns into cracks, or into holes of their own drilling, and come back later to consume them.

Often this hoarding habit runs away with itself. The bird or beast goes on

storing and storing, in a veritable orgy of acquisitiveness, long after reasonable provision has been made for the future. Such creatures pass the thrift line and become mere capitalists, getting merely for the sake of getting, even losing track of all they have gathered.

An industrious California woodpecker, for example, will hammer away tens of thousands of acorns, and even stick smooth pebbles into his storage-crevices, and leave them there for years unused, while he just as assiduously stores the next season's crop.

Such excess of storing activity invites its own penalty. Bees are notorious for the way they will fill to overflowing whatever cavity they may chance to be inhabiting. Beekeepers know this, and pile super on super, letting them fill all the frames. Then they take away almost all the honey, leaving only enough to carry the bees through to the beginning of another season. And the poor, silly, exploited insects don't seem to have the least idea of what is happening to them.

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PHARMACOLOGY

Filling Prescriptions

➤ HOW TO assure the proper filling of 400,000,000 prescriptions each year is the main subject of a two-year pharmaceutical survey summarized by the American Council on Education.

"The American people need to realize that every time a prescription is taken to one of the 55,000 retail drug stores in this country not only health but oft-times life is at stake," said Dr. Edward C. Elliott, president emeritus of Purdue University, who directed the survey. (*See SNL*, Dec. 4, p. 367).

The survey concluded that there are approximately 96,000 pharmacists in the nation. War-time shortages are being caught up and if the present annual number of graduates totaling 4,300 is maintained there will be a surplus of trained pharmacists in 1950.

The drug store must continue to be a department store, selling banana splits, household supplies, candy, tobacco, cosmetics, etc., the survey admitted. Druggists must be successful businessmen as well as capable professionals.

The typical drug store, the survey implied, has become a community institution, social center and a source of advice dispensed along with medicine by the "Doc" behind the counter.

Recognizing the reasons why liquor is sold in some drug stores, the committee declared as a matter of common understanding that "such sale must be regarded as distinctly detrimental to the public profession of pharmacy."

Among the recommendations made by the survey report are:

Continue accrediting of colleges of pharmacy by the American Council on Pharmaceutical Education, and provide higher salaries and better qualifications for teaching staffs.

Select students for the pharmacy profession by testing before admission, together with explanations to high school students about pharmacy.

Make the present requirements for practical experience for licensure more practical or abolish them.

Take steps toward a six-year course that would lead to a Doctor of Pharmacy degree, supplementing the present four-year B.S. degree.

Study the prescriptions filled throughout the country to determine changes in practice by physicians and the effect of new drugs introduced.

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