

ENTOMOLOGY

NATURE RAMBLINGS

by Frank Thome



Stop 'Em Now!

► WINTER-WEARY folk, looking for the first robin, the first crocus, the first lilac leaves, are also likely to be greeted by other signs of spring that are not so welcome. Flies, for example.

The first few scouts of the fly hordes, that you see while outdoors is still chilly in the daytime and frosty at night, are most probably not new flies but old ones—hangers-on that have hidden away in attic crannies and other out-of-the-way nooks during the

winter, most of the time numbed into immobility by the cold but still managing to stay alive. Yet they are quite capable of propagating their evil kind, so now is the time to annihilate them, before they become too numerous to deal with by anything so elementary as a swatter. A swat in time now may save nine millions in July.

Appearance of these straggling advance guards should be sufficient warning to you to look to your anti-fly defenses while the season is yet young and before the main forces of the enemy arrive. Now is the time to get your screens out of storage, brush them off, and see if there are any fly-size leaks in them. Remember, it doesn't take much of a hole in a screen to let a fly through: their mesh is designed to be just about enough to stop a fly or an ordinary mosquito, so one or two broken or pushed-aside wires constitutes a practicable breach

in your fortress wall.

Unless your screens are of copper or other non-corroding metal, paint them. That will do much to insure continued security against the persistent enemies, who will be trying to sneak into your house as long as warm weather lasts. Do not mix DDT with your paint. This was an early recommendation that looked very promising for a time; but the very quality that makes paint good—a tight, tough, elastic outer film—is the wrong thing for DDT, because it seals it in and does not release it rapidly enough to do the flies any harm. The thing to do is paint your screens, then, after the paint has well dried, brush or spray them with a residual-type DDT preparation—there are plenty of the latter on the market now, each with its own merits, as the labels and advertising matter will not neglect to tell you.

Science News Letter, March 5, 1949

CONSERVATION

River Valley Conservation

► FULL conservation development of the river valleys of the world is essential if future generations are to have the necessities of life, Morris L. Cooke, Philadelphia management engineer, will tell the World Engineering Conference to be held this spring at Cairo.

In this paper, already transmitted for preliminary study, he characterized the present as a "time of wars of unprecedented violence, of waste and destruction beyond anything imagined by those who lived before us." Multiple-purpose river valley development is essential to make use of water power, prevent floods and erosion, and keep the land in the highest state of productivity.

"The tragedy of this historic period has washed not only over the world's men and women, but onto the earth from which they draw their sustenance," he continued. "A combination of erosion of the life-sustaining soil and floods, of predatory mining, grazing, lumbering, farming and industrial practices . . . has piled destruction on destruction until a rapidly growing world population must soberly contemplate a climax of starvation, want and death."

The development of the Tennessee Valley is an example of what he advocates, Mr. Cooke states. He pointed out that the Tennessee Valley work involves drastic decentralization and recognition of the watershed as a logical area for public administration, especially where the conservation and most effective use of soil and water are first considerations. He also referred to somewhat similar work in widely separated parts of the world.

The paper is for delivery at the Second International Technical Congress which will be held at Cairo at the invitation of the Egyptian government, March 20 to 26. Engineers from all parts of the world

will participate. The full paper is published in MECHANICAL ENGINEERING, official publication of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers.

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Science Service Radio

► LISTEN in to a discussion on "Far Below Zero" on "Adventures in Science" over the Columbia Broadcasting System at 3:15 p.m. EST, Saturday, March 12. Dr. Elliott Montroll, head of the physics branch of the Office of Naval Research, and Larson M. McKenzie of the same branch, will be guests of Watson Davis, director of Science Service. At temperatures hundreds of degrees below zero, things behave strangely; metals lose their resistance to electricity and helium liquefied at slightly above the absolute zero of temperature turns out to be a most amazing substance. The guests will tell how industry and the Navy are making use of these strange phenomena.

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