

therefore means 'man of the woods'. One early scientific name of the orang-utan was a literal translation of the Malay into Latin: "Homo sylvaticus". A letter but only slightly freer translation was made by P. T. Barnum; his 'wild man of Borneo' was simply an orang-utan."

In order to end the confusion of names among these animals, Dr. Stiles has decided to cut the Gordian knot, and instead of trying to determine exactly which ones among the many names that have been given to them should be applied to the various species, he will appeal to the International Committee on Zoological Nomenclature to authorize the use of names on which no conflict in use exists.

-----

#### GOVERNMENT GEOLOGIST SEEKS OIL IN ALASKA

Oil in the Arctic is the objective of Dr. Philip S. Smith of the U. S. Geological Survey, who has just left for Alaska to continue his survey of the Government's great oil reserve on the shores of the Arctic Ocean. According to present plans, the party will make a 700-mile trip overland with dog sledges from Nenana, the northern terminal of the Alaska Railroad, to Kotzebue, on an arm of Bering Strait, and thence northeastward across the unexplored Arctic coastal plain and adjacent regions. From April until September they will be wholly out of touch with civilization, and will have to subsist entirely on supplies which they will carry, plus what game the country affords.

"Of course there is oil there," Dr. Smith told a representative of Science Service. "There is a great deal of it, if our explorations during the past two years mean anything. But we must not immediately jump to the conclusion that the Navy is sure of fuel in unlimited supplies. If you will look at the map you will see that there are some very difficult problems to be solved before we can get the oil out.

"Even though the best indications we have found so far are near the sea, it is unlikely that tankers can be used to carry the oil. That part of the Arctic is free of ice for only about one month in the year, and not entirely free even then. Moreover, there are no harbors, and large ships have to lie at least a mile off shore. That would mean an almost impossible job of storage and loading, and would require a whole navy of tank ships.

"I am not intending to throw cold water, however. If we discover oil in large enough quantities to justify it--and that would require very large quantities--the railroad could be pushed through, or a pipe line built. But a pipe line would present problems of its own. The mean annual temperature of that region is only ten above zero, and the line would probably have to be kept heated at frequent intervals, or the oil would become too thick to flow. Fortunately, there is a good deal of bituminous coal up there, so we probably would not have to burn some of the oil to heat the rest. However, all this is speculation as to the future; what we have to do just now is first catch our oil."

According to Dr. Smith, the Arctic slope of Alaska is not a very exciting country. For seventy-five or eighty miles inland from the coast, it is flat tundra, more or less marshy and traversed by slow, meandering rivers. Then there is a rise, a sort of low piedmont, sloping up to the foot of the interior mountain range. This region more or less resembles parts of Oklahoma and eastern Colorado,

except that the vegetation is dominated by low bushes, mosses and lichens, instead of the grass of the Plains states. The principal large game is caribou on the lower levels, and mountain sheep as one gets up into greater altitudes.

---

#### MUCH TIMBER LAND NOW LYING IDLE

Despite the efforts of the U. S. Government in the past half century to encourage forests, 81 million acres of land suitable only for timber growth are now lying idle. This denuded area, moreover, is chiefly in the East where the lumber is most needed for manufactures.

But this is not to the discredit of the United States Forest Service. Without itsaid, the figure would have been much worse. The forestry service has taken great strides towards conservation since Dr. Franklin B. Hough began his research and educational program of reforestation and protection in 1876, the semicentennial of which will be celebrated this year.

A half-century ago there were no Government-owned forests set aside for conservation. Today 21 per cent. of the 470 million acres of forest land in the United States is owned by the public--nation, state, or municipality, reports William B. Greeley, chief forester.

We use forest products in such a multiplicity of ways that they are a great drain upon our forests--in pencils, paper, turpentine, rosin, soap, shoes, automobiles, boats, and even in artificial silk. As the population goes uphill our forests go downhill. Four times as fast as the forests can be replenished, they are being depleted. Two hundred and fifty million trees of average size are cut every year, or an area equal to Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Jersey put together. A large amount of this lumber is used by newspapers, for it takes 16 acres of spruce trees to make the paper for one Sunday edition of a metropolitan newspaper.

Mr. Greeley sees as one help to the situation the making of forestry a part of diversified agriculture, that is, forest planting on farms and the practical instruction of farmers in forestry. Already 150 million acres of forest land--nearly one third the total for the entire country--is in farm holdings. Fifteen states now maintain forest nurseries from which small trees are furnished at nominal cost to farmers and other landowners desiring to plant them.

---

#### NEW RAYS FILL UNKNOWN GAP

Another gap in the spectrum of radiation, which includes light, X-rays, radio waves, and the very short rays investigated by Millikan, has now been filled, it was announced recently by Wynn Williams of the University of North Wales. He has been making investigations of sparking between electrodes and accidentally found the new rays, which are believed to fill part of the gap between the longer X-rays and the short ultra violet rays, which lie beyond the violet in the visible spectrum. It is stated that the new rays will penetrate air for several meters and will go through thin celluloid films, but are stopped by solids such as gold leaf and even thin mica.

---