

"are the refrigerators of the earth above which the high currents of air which have traveled from the equator are sucked down and drained off as though through a gigantic shaft, and from the bottom of this shaft they are poured out in all directions toward the margins of the ice-cap to make their return to the furnace on the equator, thus making of our air circulation a complete circuit."

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#### TAXI DRIVERS PICKED BY NEW TESTS

A new and promising set of drivers' tests, which reproduce traffic conditions of city streets by means of apparatus in a laboratory, has been devised, and is being used by taxicab companies in seven cities as a means of selecting drivers.

The tests, which are the work of Dr. A. J. Snow, of Northwestern University, are not finally perfected, but a preliminary report of them appears in a recent issue of the *Journal of Applied Psychology*, because, the author says, "of the popular and misleading publicity that has appeared in newspapers and magazines" and because of the insistent demand of the automobile industry to know the facts about them.

The tests are said to be equally suited to selection of pilots for any transportation vehicle--street car, electric elevated line, steam or electric railway, and passenger or freight motor car. They are being used by different taxicab companies in Chicago, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, South Bend, Toledo, Omaha, and Louisville.

The method of picking drivers is illustrated by Dr. Snow's test of "perception of space and motion". Two toy automobiles, whose motion is controlled by a system of pulleys and weights, are mounted on a board 20 feet long. A fixed scale of numbers is marked three inches apart along tracks on the board. The prospective taxi pilot stands facing the apparatus, 15 feet away. The vehicles are moved at different speeds in various directions, according to eight different prearranged combinations. The driver is asked at a given signal to indicate at what point the two cars will pass or overtake one another. The experimenter records the error between the driver's estimate and the actual point of passing, and also the rapidity of his responses, his speed of learning and constancy of attention.

"The theory underlying this test," Dr. Snow explains, "is that the subject who is unable, with any degree of accuracy or promptness, to make the necessary judgment suffers from a visual defect, which makes him an undesirable candidate for a pilot of any transportation vehicle. It should be understood, of course, that for each test a learning period has been established. In this period the instructions are explained until the applicant can demonstrate to us an understanding of them."

Another test measures the emotional stability of a driver during an emergency by requiring him to throw certain switches at certain signals, at the same time that he receives a slight electric shock.

Recklessness is tested by having him guide a small metal pencil through miniature traffic lanes on a board. The lanes vary in width and length and have sharp turns and curves. Electrical apparatus attached to the board shows the

driver's steadiness and judgement at difficult points and also registers the time in fractions of a second that it takes him to move the stylus through the points of difficulty.

An individual's intelligence is no gauge of his success as a driver, Dr. Snow finds, except that very low intelligence is a sure indication of unfitness. Consequently, drivers are given only a simple intelligence test, to test such powers as memory, attention during distractions, and common sense reason. The taxicab applicants are also put through a rigorous physical examination.

A Chicago taxi company which employs 6,000 drivers has rejected 15 per cent. of its applicants since January first, using the new tests as a standard of fitness. The company reports that the reduction of accidents has been substantial.

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#### BRITISH EXPEDITION SEEKS MAYA RUINS

By E. N. Fallaize

Secretary of the Royal Anthropological Institute, London.

Mayan ruins on British soil in Central America are the objectives of an expedition under T. A. Joyce, deputy keeper of the Department of Ethnography of the British Museum, London, and F. A. Mitchell-Hedges, now in the field, on a voyage of exploration in British Honduras.

The expedition is an outcome of the interest of the results obtained by Mr. Mitchell-Hedges last year, when he was accompanied by T. W. Gann, the well-known authority on Central American archaeology, and spent some months in exploring the ancient cities of the Maya. One of the most remarkable monuments discovered by him was a vast amphitheatre which is like nothing else known in America.

A great deal of the work done was of a pioneer character, and did little more than clear away the jungle, but it was possible to conclude that the remains belonged to two periods, of which the work of the earlier was of a much higher character than that of the later. In the former were found blocks covered with painted stucco, which evidently had been introduced into the work but belonged to a much earlier period still. The buildings were probably ceremonial. At any rate they showed no sign of military defenses.

It may be expected that the present expedition will obtain much information which should be of value both in itself and in assisting to clear up some of the problems of archaeology and history in the other states of Mexico and Central America.

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In a storm on the Atlantic, waves average 40 feet in height.

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