

PSYCHOLOGY

Elimination of Unsafe Drivers Impractical to Cut Accidents

REDUCTION of traffic accidents cannot be achieved by eliminating unsafe drivers. That is impractical, but much can be done in the way of improving driving conditions and so making safe driving as simple and easy as possible for all drivers, Dr. Knight Dunlap, of Johns Hopkins University, and chairman of the Committee on the Psychology of the Highway of the National Research Council, said in a report published in the *Scientific Monthly*.

Dr. Dunlap does not approve of the introduction of elaborate psychological tests for applicants for a driver's license, in order to eliminate the unsafe driver.

"Theoretically, tests could be devised for the identification of the worst of these classes," he said. "I do not even doubt that the tests could be developed practically, if a number of competent psychologists devoted their energies to it."

"The application of such tests, however, is another matter. We know the difficulty in keeping even the simplest tests up to standard, and we know that the administration of complex tests of sufficient precision to be determinative of mental conditions would require a vast army of skilled experts who are not available and will not be available. Under any other conditions of adminis-

tration such tests would be a mere stench."

For improvement in driving conditions Dr. Dunlap made the following recommendations:

1. Traffic lights must be of colors which can be most quickly discernible by all drivers, including the color-blind. And their form and placement must be worked out on the basis of human beings' habits of perception.

2. Information signs must be conspicuous, but they must not require much reading. The signs now in use to indicate route numbers are cited by the psychologist as good examples of such signs.

3. Dividing lines on the roads don't deter the reckless drivers, but are an aid to the drivers who want to be careful.

4. Cautions and instructions must not be painted on the road surface. They are a distraction to the driver who tries to read them and are hidden by snow or even water on the street.

5. Body designs must be improved to cut windows lower, set the radiator hood down, and give greater depth to the windshield.

6. Road edges must be improved so as to eliminate the hazard to a driver forced off the road and reduce the fear of such a mishap that now leads to unintentional road-hogging.

Science News Letter, December 3, 1932

IMMUNOLOGY

Seeks to Avoid Chills From Anti-Pneumonia Serum

PROGRESS in finding a way to avoid the fever and chills which sometimes follow when antipneumococcic serum is given in the treatment of pneumonia is reported by Dr. A. L. Barnes of the Massachusetts State Department of Public Health. Dr. Barnes found that certain lots of serum produced this reaction while others did not, but he was unable to find any chemical differences in the lots to account for the difference in effect. All were equally potent in combating the disease.

Science News Letter, December 3, 1932



Red Cedar

WINTER is the time of the evergreen trees. In summer, the broad-leaved forest attracts most attention, with its greater versatility in shape and size of leaves, flowers and fruits, but when the other trees stand naked in the winter winds, we look again at the hardy tree folk who keep their leaves green whatever the weather.

Among these not the least attractive, both to admiring humans and to feeding birds, is the red cedar, or to be more meticulously accurate, the Virginia juniper. For the tree we call red cedar is not a cedar at all, strictly speaking; the true cedars are all inhabitants of the Old World, and include only three species: the Atlas cedar of north Africa, the Lebanon cedar of the Holy Land, and the deodar of India. But the name "cedar" has so long been applied indiscriminately to any evergreen tree with odorous wood, and especially to the various species of juniper trees, that there is no use being schoolteachery about it. So we shall go right on making cedar chests, and cedar fenceposts, and cedarwood leadpencils, and cedar oil, out of red juniper trees. And the winter birds that eat the blue berries with the frosty white "bloom" will neither know nor care what the real name of the tree may be.

Science News Letter, December 3, 1932

Because Australia has sent so many helpful insects to Florida and California, to aid in fighting crop pests, the State of Florida recently sent Australia a supply of pumpkin bugs infested with the tachinid fly, hoping that these flies will help Australia to keep down the pumpkin bugs there.

▼ The Science Service radio address next week will be on the subject,

**R
A
D
I
O**

HEALTH EXAMINATIONS AND CANCER

by

Dr. Franklin H. Martin

Director General of the American College of Surgeons.

FRIDAY, DEC. 9

at 12:45 P. M., Eastern Standard Time

Over Stations of The Columbia Broadcasting System