

## Railroad, Bus Service Stalled In No. California

San Francisco — (U.P.) — Railroad and bus service was nearly at a standstill in many areas of Northern and Central California today because of floods.

The Southern Pacific reported its Shasta route closed because of a slide at Cruzette, Ore., but the Shasta Daylights ran over the longer Siskiyou route.

The Overland route was closed over the Sierra because of a washout at Emigrant Gap. Workers hoped to restore the line in time for today's Overland schedule.

The San Joaquin Valley line was blocked by a washout north of Tulare. Trains detoured over Santa Fe Lines between Fresno and Bakersfield.

The SP canceled nine trains yesterday.

### WP Line Blocked

The Western Pacific's main line was blocked by slides. WP trains were detoured via Barstow.

Slides closed the Northwest Pacific railroad between San Rafael and Eureka. NWP officials denied a report that the line would be out until April. They said it should be open in three weeks.

Pacific Greyhound Lines canceled its service to Reno, running buses only as far as Colfax, Calif. Service to many Northern California points was subject to detours.

Reno Airport was expected to reopen this morning. United Air Lines announced it scheduled a plane for Reno which would leave San Francisco at 7 a.m. However, night flights to Reno may not be restored immediately.

Southwest Airways was unable to land at flooded airports at Marysville and Eureka. Its morning plane could not land at San Luis Obispo yesterday.

## Bob Hope Hurt But Gets Laugh

London — (U.P.) — Bob Hope has discovered after all these years that the easiest way to get a belly laugh is to take a fall.

Hope took the tumble from Joan Rhodes, an English strong-woman who looks like Marilyn Monroe with muscles. It came during his Christmas Eve show in Iceland.

"What am I paying script-writers for?" he groaned. "I could have been falling all this time for nothing."

The fall brought down the house—but it wasn't very funny to Hope. He had an appointment with a doctor today for X-rays and was ordered to take it easy till his condition is ascertained.

Hope and the muscular Miss Rhodes were giving a special show for U.S. troops in Iceland when the accident happened. He had made a series of cracks about her strength when she started to pick him up to carry off the stage. She slung him across her shoulder, but he kept going and landed on his head.

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WINNING NATIONAL TITLE in Farm Bureau Federation's big beet contest at Caldwell, Ida., this entry by Newhall Land & Farming Co., El Nido, Cal., is in protective custody of Policewoman Donna Hill. (International Soundphoto)

## Snake Charming Serious Matter in Indian Village

New Delhi — (U.P.) — The charming of snakes is no laughing business in the little village of Mithapur, home of the strange and fabled men whose weird flute music charms the most dreaded reptile.

Snake charming is a time-honored and almost hereditary profession in Mithapur, 12 miles south of New Delhi. It's there that snakes are worshipped by the wedding party both before and after the ceremony. It's there that men make sacred promises to snakes and never break them.

Mithapur males are taught as seven-year-olds to search out the snakes in the thick jungle underbrush and tame them with the piercing music of a reed flute.

The 35 families of the village are members of a Hindu caste known as "Jogi." They pay homage to an 85-year-old high priest who lives far away in Punjab, where once a year snake charmers from all over India go on pilgrimage to offer him coins, flowers and part of their earnings.

Years of training may finally bring to a villager a certificate from the high priest that allows "use of the art of snake-charming for entertainment and to earn a livelihood." The severe penalty for misusing the art is excommunication from the caste.

The caste is so strict that outside marriages are never permitted.

The head man at Mithapur is 40-year-old Nanu Nath, who arranges marriages between snake-charmers of his village and those in other similar villages throughout India.

Although not allowed to infringe on another village's territory, individual snake charmers are permitted to leave India to practice their profession in other countries. They have gone to Burma, Malaya, Ceylon, Thailand and even Tibet.

Nanu Nath talked about these strictly enforced codes as he showed off a six-foot python, several small cobras and a two-headed snake.

He claimed that the two-headed snake uses one head for six months and then switches to the other one.

Nanu Nath's villagers go on four during the winter, roaming from place to place in Mithapur's territory with little more than their snakes and reed flutes. None of his group has ever traveled by train.

Nanu Nath claimed that the snakes can be caught in the jungle "just by playing the flute." But he explained that the more than 2,000 snakes around his village were so used to the music that they would not respond. They have to be captured by hand.

Once the snake is caught, the rules of the sect say the charmer must promise the snake that he will set it free within a certain period of time. The charmers believe that if the snake is not freed on the promised date, then either the snake or one of its relations will bite him. They also feel that the gods would be displeased.

Small snakes must be freed in 22 days. Not even the largest snake is kept for more than six months.

When caught by hand, the snakes are grabbed by the tail,

## Is That So?

Sharpen your wits — here comes a noggin crusher. Answers follow questions and each one has its individual score. If you score 95 or better, in my league that qualifies you as a Park Naturalist; 85 per cent assures you a position as Ranger Naturalist; 75 qualifies you as a willinger but lacking in outdoor experience; 35 as a Drugstore Cowpoke; mighty in voice but weak in knowledge. Let's go, going.

1. Approximately, this first section begins with winter weather.

1. In which of these places did the highest American snowfall—884 inches—occur during one winter? A. Canada; B. Northern U.S.; C. Southern U.S.

2. Snow may lie a half-year in which region of the U. S. which is heavily travelled in summer? A. Yosemite National Park; B. Yellowstone National Park; C. Acadia National Park (Maine)?

The deer makes a very important adjustment toward winter's cold. A. It grows a heavier hide. B. It puts on a heavy layer of tallow and body fats. C. It shrinks its stomach.

4. Winter's deep accumulation of snow helps the snowshoe rabbit mainly by: A. Making a step-ladder so the rabbit can reach higher up. B. By slowing up the rabbit's predators. C. By helping make the white rabbit invisible.

5. Deer gather in herds when snow is deep because: A. A group can pack down the snow and feed better. B. It gives them mutual protection against predators. C. It is the mating season when a buck gathers his harem. (Ten each; 50 points)

### Extinct Birds

II. One of earth's saddest tales is that of species' extinction. Among the more than 100 birds



which have become extinct in the past century are the Great Auk, Flightless Teal, and Apapane. Which bird came from each of these islands: Iceland? Laysan? Hawaii? (Five each; 15 points.)

III. Among man's faithful domesticated animals are: Dog, pig, cow, reindeer, sheep, goat, cat, ass, horse, camel, elephant, llama, birds, and insects. Select the appropriate animals from this group to which the following statements apply:

1. I serve man for meat, milk, hide, draught, but yet I am still in a state of semidomestication.

2. I am milked from behind. My ancestors may have originated in Iran.

## Duplicating Signs Removed From Parks

Washington — (U.P.) — For those who don't believe in signs or just don't like them, the parks of the nation's capital are becoming more pleasant.

A removal of duplicating traffic signs from the parks has been underway for six months. The job is being handled by a three-man task force from the Interior Department's National Capital Parks division, including one rabid sign-hater—Robert W. Andrews, a park landscape architect.

"We'd like to eliminate all signs," Andrews said. That isn't possible, of course, but Andrews is doing his best. So far, 750 signs have been taken down and only 4,212 are left.

The sign elimination drive was started by a report prepared in December, 1953, which said that the increase in traffic signs was having an "adverse aesthetic effect" on the parks and causing "confusion to the public." Edward J. Kelley, superintendent of National Capital Parks, took the hint and appointed Andrews, Park Police Sgt. Dave Kushner and Sutton Jett, department public information officer, to cut out all duplications.

The most obnoxious examples of redundancy are parking signs. There are too many of them and they are too complicated to be easily understood. So they have been coming down under the watchful eye of Andrews. Park police must now get his permission to put up any signs.

their grunting bodies pinned to the ground with a stick and then held just behind the head.

Nanu Nath claims that nothing is ever done to the snake, no teeth pulled, no venom sacs removed.

He said that once a snake is caught it becomes tame and usually does not bite. He has no explanation why music tames them.

But the man who has been handling snakes all his life admits that he has been bitten "about 20 times."

By EUGENE BURNS  
Ranger-Naturalist



FLAMING CRASH KILLS 17—The wheels of Eastern Airlines plane that crashed in the backyards of homes bordering Municipal Airport at Jacksonville, Fla., stopped short of this house. The other pair of wheels landed against the porch of another home. All aboard, 12 passengers and five crew members, died in the fiery crash.

## He'll Be Well-Dressed Refugee From Flood

Marysville, Calif. — (U.P.) — When flood waters forced Warren Thornton, city editor of the Marysville Appeal-Democrat, to flee his home, he elected to save what clothing he could and ordered his mother-in-law to salvage some food.

When he reached safety Thornton discovered he had saved a tuxedo. His mother-in-law salvaged bread for turkey dressing but left the turkey behind.

## Dog Not About To Lose New Friend

Santa Cruz, Calif. — (U.P.) — Garageman Stan Prolo pulled a helpless dog to safety from the roof of a nearly submerged car during the height of the flood and the dog has followed at his heels ever since.

Prolo says the pooch considers him "dog's best friend."

Grind oats fine for hogs, coarse for beef cattle and feed them whole to sheep.

## REDS MAPPING ISLAND

Taipei, Formosa — (U.P.) — The Chinese Communists have begun air-mapping the Nationalist-held Matsu Islands north of Formosa, official reports said today. The flights touched off air raid alerts.

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