

Small Worlds Around Us

By LYNN M. WATKINS

(Register and Tribune Syndicate 1962)

Winter Weather Chases Outdoor Mice Indoors

He had been reasonably happy all summer in the woodpile but the cooler nights of fall dictated a change. Outdoor living became a little unpleasant, so he sought ways and means of moving indoors.

During the summer he had hunted food and wandered during the warm summer nights. Attuned as he is even to slight changes, he sensed the seasonal difference. The mouse searched for an opening in the house where he could be more comfortable.

There are many hazards with which the young and inexperienced mouse has to acquaint himself. In fact, he almost has to develop a flair for mechanics, for nowadays he is coming into contact with dangerous things such as machines—refrigerators, for example. The lower part of these machines affords some pleasant hiding places, but judgment must be exercised. The little guy must adjust himself to spinning wheels and rapidly traveling belts. When the machinery of an electric refrigerator starts, the mouse who has decided to live along side it must undergo some nightly nervous moments.

Nasty Hum

Usually there is a fan, whirling with a nasty hum, that can cut him in two. There's also a certain vibration. At first this must shake the little animal until his teeth rattle. Until he gets used to it, his daytime nap may be almost a nightmare of trembling starts and jarring stops. Every time the motor starts the mouse must become vibrant with the motion. His little world rocks and rolls.

But the mouse in the "engine room" of the refrigerator must sense that if he can only adjust himself to the shaking, and avoid the rapidly moving wheels, he is really sitting on top of the world. The advantages of his shaking abode cancel out the noise and danger, for on a cold night the motor heat is very comforting. He is in a place where the house cat cannot come. Even the housewife seldom looks into the engine compartment.

And if by some strange coincidence of nature a little girl mouse comes to live in the engine room, his cup of joy runs completely over.

For, with only little effort on the part of the tiny couple, bits of paper, string and shreds of soft cloth can be easily secured and brought back into a far corner away from the whirling blades and a cozy nest made.

Gladdened Nest

In here, a little later, if no unfortunate accidents occur such as a trap baited with an irresistible tidbit, or if no other fatality breaks up the home, a litter of baby mice will come to gladden the nest.

Mr. and Mrs. Mouse don't know it, but their children, born in this mechanical environment, are faced with even more problems than were their parents; problems such as mice born a few years ago never heard of or had to contend with. From the first glimmer of consciousness their world rattles and shakes every time the motor starts or stops. By the time they are big enough to leave the home nest and start out on their own, they have practically acquired the "shakes."

It must be somewhat disconcerting when they leave their shaky home, stand on the immovable kitchen floor for the first time and find that the bigger world is more stable than they imagined. Just from sympathetic memory and a vibration with which they have always lived, they could hardly be expected to stop shaking. Environment can do some strange things—even to a young mouse.

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Salem—UPI—Portland Attorney John C. Beatty has been sworn in as civil service commissioner in a ceremony in the governor's office.

Society's Records Answers Question

Port Washington, Wis. —UPI—The Ozaukee County Historical society document that an Irishman is practical and can use his wit to gain a point.

The society reproduced a record of a town meeting in the bygone Irish settlement of St. Finbars in eastern Wisconsin at which a fence was proposed for the community cemetery. One Irishman was dead against a fence and made his point this way:

"Who's trying to get in the cemetery?" he asked.

"No one," the others admitted.

"Anyone trying to get out?"

"No."

"Why do we need a fence?" the Irishman concluded.

The fence wasn't built, the society records showed.



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Wide Significance Seen in Decision On Segregation

Washington —UPI—A long-awaited federal court decision on school segregation in Philadelphia may have far-reaching significance for many large cities of the north and west, a report by the Civil Rights commission indicates.

The report, prepared by Prof. Albert P. Blaustein of Rutgers university, reviewed the problem of segregation of Negroes in Philadelphia's schools despite the lack of any policy deliberately seeking it.

The question the courts must decide, according to the report, is whether the Consti-

tution requires a school board to take positive steps to integrate schools when it has no policy of segregation by race.

The report noted that school authorities "hold themselves blameless for existing segregation and insist that their present policies are legally, educationally, and morally proper—and that they are doing all they can or should do."

But Negro leaders insist the school board should move ahead with the integration of both teachers and students.

While there is a deep split over what should be done,

there apparently is little disagreement in Philadelphia over the fact that segregation does exist in the city's schools.

The report said nearly 30 per cent of Philadelphia's 214 elementary schools have Negro enrollment of one per cent or less, while another 25 per cent of the schools have Negro enrollments of 97 per cent or more.

"The superintendent of schools is the first to admit that Philadelphia's Negro schools have lower standards than the city's white schools," the report said.

Transfer Policy Attacked

Among school board policies under attack is that of allowing teachers to choose the schools at which they will teach. Negro leaders charge that the white teachers refuse to teach in Negro schools and transfer to white schools as enrollment in a school changes from white to Negro.

The report said the unwillingness of white teachers to accept assignment to predominantly Negro schools is a problem plaguing many big cities of the north and west.

"Insofar as a white or a Negro faculty results from the choice of the individual teach-

ers, albeit the right to choose is granted by the school authorities, does it present an equal-protection problem?" the report asked.

Hotel Manager on Payroll; No Hotel

Miami Beach, Fla. —UPI—It's unusual when a hotel manager hasn't seen a guest in six months.

But that's the case with Charles M. Rousseau, manager of the new Doral Beach hotel. The hostelry opens here Jan. 20, but Rousseau's been on its payroll for the past six months.

GOES ARTISTIC

Frankfort, Ky. —UPI—Kentucky now has an official state agency to help communities produce dramas, pageants and festivals—the Kentucky Council of Performing Arts.

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