

From Greenland's icy mountains,  
And from India's coral strand;  
From Africa's sunny fountains,  
And from Russia's benighted land.

WANTED—A Scientific sport who will establish a prize for the World's Championship in Chemical Spelling.

C. A. JACOBSON

MORGANTOWN, W. VA.

### A SCIENTIFIC CLEARING HOUSE

A PERSONNEL file for American investigators in the biological and physical sciences and their related technologies has been established in Washington, D. C., by the Research Information Service of the National Research Council. This directory of living research workers now lists approximately 14,000 names. A report describing the whole project, with illustrations based upon the personnel records of American psychologists, has just been issued as Bulletin Number 22 of the Council.

When these files were started, some two years or more ago, it was believed that such a record of research workers throughout the country and their scientific activities would, when classified, be widely useful; and experience has shown that through the system installed, facts as to the characteristics, interests and research activities of investigators can be expeditiously assembled.

As now organized the personnel file contains records of investigators in the following major groups of science and technology: (1) Agriculture, (2) Animal biology, (3) Anthropology, (4) Astronomy, (5) Chemistry, (6) Economics and statistics, (7) Education, (8) Engineering, (9) Geology, (10) Geography, (11) Mathematics, (12) Medicine, (13) Plant biology, (14) Physics, (15) Psychology. Several of these groups have been further subdivided as need has arisen. The files of records for economics and statistics and for education remain to be developed, but the data for investigators in other fields are now in useful form.

The original records of these investigators are supplemented by a mechanical punch-card system (Findex). The original file, arranged alphabetically, is consulted for information about any investigator whose name is known; the mechanical file, classified by subject, is con-

sulted for names of investigators having prescribed qualifications. Through this punch-card system it is the matter of but a moment to obtain from any of the major groups a list of people of specified age, experience, achievement, research interest, and so forth. By a single operation selections of names of those meeting any required research specification or combination of specifications can be made.

The usefulness of a comprehensive catalogue mechanically operated for obtaining names of specialists is almost too apparent to need mention. But the personnel file promises to function even more widely and efficiently as a clearing-house for research people who wish to communicate with one another about common or related problems. With a minimum of time and effort the Research Information Service has frequently been able to furnish a half dozen references to current investigations related to that being carried on by some isolated investigator. Such contacts bring mutual advantages and are in accordance with a growing movement to encourage coordination rather than duplication of research. The overlap of activity, too, in the various sciences makes evident the usefulness of such a central clearing-house.

A personnel service specializing in living sources of research information is no less important than a bibliographic service specializing in printed sources. Neither can replace the other but each has its place in helping to furnish a foundation for science and research. Both types of service are rendered by the Research Information Service. Those in need of either kind of assistance are invited to write to Research Information Service, 1701 Massachusetts Avenue, Washington, D. C.

HAROLD C. BINGHAM

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR,  
RESEARCH INFORMATION SERVICE.

### QUOTATION

#### VOLUNTARY STUPIDITY

EXPRESSING the conviction that any legislation attempting to limit the teaching of the doctrine of evolution would be a "profound mistake," the American Association for the Advancement of Science, at its opening session on Tuesday, at Cambridge, Mass. (the seat of