

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

Harvard College) went on record as affirming that no scientific generalization is more strongly supported by the thoroughly tested evidence than is that of organic evolution.

A scientific generalization, as we understand it, means a general truth based on the great mass of scientific data that has been compiled since science attained the exactness and definiteness that could make it the basis for reaching conclusions regarding the nature of life.

The men who form the association which has taken this action looking toward a public teaching of the doctrine which has been considered basic in the development of the system of knowledge are the best equipped students and minds in the country. If the lawyer is not to be accepted as authority in his field, if the jury which is called upon to determine cases can not accept the testimony of the experts in various lines which is laid before them in an effort to mete out justice; in a word, if the expert in any line is to be debarred, and his learning and studies discounted, then we have arrived at a point where further progress for the race is impossible. The men who are engaged in America, and the world over, for that matter, in endeavoring to build up a body of knowledge useful for the advancement of the race do not profit greatly by this labor. The fact is, they could do many other things that would bring them greater compensation. This being true, and the fact that life's blood is spent in an endeavor to gain information that will be of welfare to humanity, when considered, should at least make the general public pause and say these men have put forth their greatest efforts in attempting to gain knowledge. It is at least due them that we should weigh and consider what they would have us know.

We hold no brief for the particular doctrine, or as they call it "generalization" of evolution. If people choose to believe that they "sprang from monkeys" that is their affair. The old joke in which the man who voiced this belief was told by his hearer that evidently "he didn't spring very far" was probably as true of the one as the other man in the conversation.

The point lies here. What the best minds of the country believe and would teach, that is the thing which should be promulgated in schools. Those who know less are not the ones

who should set themselves up as judges as to what the youth of the country should be taught. Two other things should be kept in mind. One is that the schools to-day are not principally engaged in pouring stuff into the noggin of the pupil. They are busily engaged in teaching him how he can learn things for himself. The other big thing to keep in mind is that beliefs and teachings are more or less a matter of fashion. Ideas and thoughts that are held for a period of years wane and are discredited, then again they come back into fashion and favor.

Only recently in North Carolina we have had a remarkable instance of the absurdity of the fight on evolution. At a state-wide denominational gathering in which one of the leaders in education in the state was expected to be grilled for his utterances on "evolution," he preached such an inspirational sermon as to carry the convention off its feet. The man who had digested the evolutionary theory had still not forgotten his Bible and his God.

So it must be with any body of educators who endeavor to teach the best that is known to the nation's young. Their mind must not be closed to great truths no matter from what source they may come. Their faith must not be so small as to be shaken by the "generalizations" of modern science.

We must still prove all things, and hold fast to that which is good. The way to accomplish that is by learning all that may be learned and not by rejecting all that can be rejected, else will it be said with the truth, that the blind lead the blind.—*The Asheville Advocate*.

DEVELOPED AND POTENTIAL WATER POWER OF THE UNITED STATES

IN 1908 the Bureau of the Census made a special census of the developed water powers of the United States for the report of the National Conservation Commission (Senate Doc. 676, 60th Cong., 2nd session). The data collected were also published by the U. S. Geological Survey in Water-Supply Paper 234, "Papers on the conservation of water resources." This census showed that there were in the United States 31,537 water power plants of all sizes, whose