News of Science

National Merit Scholarship Program

Formation of the National Merit Scholarship Corporation, Evanston, Ill., was announced on 6 Sept. by its president, John M. Stalnaker. The corporation is an independent, nonprofit organization whose purpose is to devise and administer a nation-wide system of scholarships for higher education. The Ford Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation of New York have undertaken to finance the activity by providing grants totaling $2.5 million for its administrative expenses. The Ford Foundation has also appropriated a $10-million scholarship fund, payable at the rate of $1 million a year for 10 years, and is prepared to finance additional scholarships up to a total of $8 million. All secondary schools, public and private, are entitled to participate in the program.

The major underlying purposes of these grants are twofold: to find this country's most talented young people and make a college education available to them regardless of their financial situation; and to make it easy for business enterprises to contribute effectively to the support of higher education. A further purpose is to provide, in one organization, a single program that will reduce wasteful duplication of operation and expense and will, at the same time, protect fully the natural interests and purposes of the donors. The flexibility of the present program provides this protection.

In addition to Stalnaker, the members of the corporation's board of directors are Laird Bell, *chairman,* of Bell, Boyd, Marshall and Lloyd, Chicago; Walker Lee Cisler, president, Detroit Edison Co.; Ward Darley, president, University of Colorado; John S. Dickey, president, Dartmouth College; J. W. Edwards, superintendent of schools, Portland, Ore.; Henry T. Heald, chancellor, New York University; Dexter M. Keezer, vice president, McGraw-Hill Publishing Co., New York; Nancy D. Lewis, dean, Pembroke College; I. Newman, president, Maison Blanche Co., New Orleans, La.; Hollis F. Price, president, LeMoyne College; Sidney J. Weinberg, partner, Goldman Sachs and Co., New York; and Robert E. Wilson, chairman of the board, Standard Oil Co. (Ind.), Chicago.

All scholarship selections will be made on the basis of merit, but the stipend will be based on need. The minimum stipend will be $100 a year; the maximum will cover the full cost of attending the institution selected; in every case a "cost of education" grant will be made to the college.

The interest and cooperation of corporations concerned with the higher education of exceptional students is invited. The National Merit Scholarship Corporation has $8 million with which to match contributions received from corporations or from other donors. These funds, not otherwise available, would serve to double the effectiveness of the donor's contribution. Scholarships financed by these matching funds will be known as National Merit Scholarships. The program provides the following advantages to corporations.

1) All the mechanism and operation of a nationwide selective program will be undertaken, carried out, and paid for by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation, which will also administer the scholarship throughout its duration at no cost to the donor.

2) Donor-identity with all scholarships is completely maintained at all times, each such scholarship bearing the donor designation.

3) Donors may specify criteria for their scholars, such as geographic origin or location, career-purpose, type of education desired, identity or regional location of student's first-choice college, sex of students, parents' occupation, and so forth. Participation is limited to American citizens. Because the race and religion of participants will not be considered in making selections, information on these items will not be obtained. The scholarship corporation or the donor will select, from the winners of the competition, students conforming as nearly as possible to the donor's requirements.

4) Donors may provide any desired number of scholarships, on a 4-year basis, at the average cost of all scholarships, including grants to institutions. They may pay either in a lump sum or year by year. Costs will be readjusted at the end of each year.

5) It is estimated that the average cost of a 4-year college scholarship is $6000; as a rule, of this amount $2500 will be given to the college selected, the tuition will cost an additional $2500, and $1000 will be required for other student expenses.

With the announcement of the National Merit Scholarship Corporation, both the Sears-Roebuck Foundation and Time, Inc., revealed plans to participate in the program. Sears will provide $600,000 for the support of 100 4-year scholarships in 1956. Each year thereafter it is expected that Sears will award 100 more Sears Foundation merit scholarships. Time, Inc., has allocated $30,000 to support five Time-Life scholarships. The Time grant was actually made in 1953 when plans for establishing the scholarship corporation were still in the formative stage.

Beginning this fall, the more than 24,000 secondary schools of the nation will be invited to participate annually in the National Merit Scholarship Program by selecting the outstanding 5 percent of their senior classes as available candidates. All such entrants will be given a screening test; the highest scorers in each state, to the extent of 10 times the number of scholarships available for that state, will be given the scholastic aptitude test of the College Entrance Examination Board. The highest scorers in this test, for each state, to the extent of 5 times the number of scholarships to be awarded, will be requested to supply further information with regard to school records, recommendations, and biographical information. Using all of this background material, the selection of the winners will be made.

To enter a school in the program, the principal *must return the entry form by 14 Oct.* to National Merit Scholarship Program, Educational Testing Service, 20 Nassau St., Princeton, N. J. The preliminary aptitude test is to be given on 26 Oct. The Merit Program, as now financed, is the largest independent scholarship program in the history of American education.

News Briefs

■ Tests of the effect of primary cosmic radiation on animals have been made in connection with Air Research and Development Command research projects that are being conducted in the Space Biology Branch of the Aero-Medical Field Laboratory at Holloman Air Development Center, N.M. Living animals were exposed to cosmic radiation during

a series of balloon flights from Sault Ste Marie, Mich., in the summer of 1954. The baloons used were of a plastic type that is capable of maintaining altitudes higher than 90,000 feet for a minimum of 28 hours.

Monkeys were sent aloft to test the effects of cosmic radiation on the central nervous system. Investigators who observed the animals for a period of 6 months after the flights were not able to detect any adverse effects on the animals' behavior. Albino mice were exposed to test radiation effects on eyes. No cataracts were observed in the eyes of the mice after exposure.

None of the specimens, except black rats, lost hair or suffered permanent injuries from exposure to primary cosmic radiation. The black rats incurred some damage to hair follicle pigment cells—the affected cells produced white hair.

■ Blueprints of Japan's experimental rockets were stolen from a car in downtown Tokyo on 28 Aug. Hideo Itokawa, a professor and head of Japan's rocket research, said the plans were for baby rockets that were tested in mid-August as well as for supersonic two-stage models that are to be fired this fall.

■ The Sabbatsberg Hospital in Stockholm, Sweden, is starting an artery bank, according to a report from the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. Swedish scientists have stated that methods of preserving arteries have been perfected that permit storage for long periods.

■ The House of Representatives approved appropriations totaling $89,138,000 for the National Institutes of Health for the coming year. This is the full amount of the budget request and $7,870,000 more than was voted last year. Almost half of the increase is for the National Institute of Mental Health.

■ The rare, diminutive key deer—named for the Florida Keys they inhabit—number 94, according to a census taken by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Frequent counts are made in an effort to save these tiny mammals from extinction.

Smallest of all American deer species, the average adult key deer is 27 inches tall, 38 inches long, and weighs 30 pounds. The young are no bigger than cottontail rabbits.

■ A Cancer Chemotherapy National Committee has been established; it is headed by Sidney Farber of Boston. The committee will give guidance to a national voluntary program of cooperative research and development to find and produce effective drugs for the treatment of cancer. Kenneth M. Endicott of the National Cancer Institute is executive secretary of the committee and is in charge of the full-time staff. Headquarters will be located at the Cancer Chemotherapy National Service Center, in Bethesda, Md.

■ A new type of vaccine to prevent Newcastle disease in chickens has been developed at the Michigan State University Experiment Station. Walter N. Mack, microbiologist, reports that he has modified the Newcastle virus with a drug in order to make a noninfectious vaccine.

It is reported that the vaccine will not produce Newcastle disease and that other viruses that may be in the egg material from which the vaccine is made are rendered harmless by the chemical treatment. The treatment destroys the disease-producing ability of the virus but does not harm its ability to produce antibodies in the chicken.

■ Plans have been announced for the immediate construction of a national headquarters building for the Association of American Medical Colleges in Evanston, Ill. The building is to be located at Ridge Ave. and Central St., 2 blocks west of Northwestern University on a site made available by the university. Gifts from the China Medical Board of New York and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation made the building possible.

Founded in 1876 and reorganized in 1890, the association represents 81 United States medical colleges and 12 in Canada, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. Present headquarters are at 185 N. Wabash Ave., Chicago.

Scientists in the News

WILLIAM H. MARTIN, a retired vice president of Bell Telephone Laboratories who has been serving as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for applications engineering, has been appointed director of research and development for the Army. In his new capacity, Martin will exercise the same degree of responsibility as an Assistant Secretary and will be given complete authority over Army research programs.

Creation of this research post is the result of some criticisms by the Hoover Commission on Organization of the Executive Branch of the Government [*Science* **121**, 847 (17 June 1955)]. The commission pointed out that some research functions suffered because of overlapping activities. Improved Army organization is expected from the new appointment.

LEOPOLD INFELD, theoretical physicist and a professor at the University of Warsaw, has been appointed by the Polish Academy of Sciences to head a committee that will plan and coordinate Poland's research in the peaceful uses of atomic energy. The committee is composed of 30 specialists in physics, chemistry, biology, and technology.

The academy has also established a Nuclear Research Institute under the direction of ANDRZEJ SOLTAN. Soltan's recent work has been concerned with methods for detecting the presence of uranium and thorium in certain minerals.

JACOB VERDUIN, who until recently was associate professor of the Franz Theodore Stone Institute of Hydrobiology (now the Francis Theodore Stone Laboratory), which is sponsored by Ohio State University at Put-in-Bay, Ohio, has been appointed associate professor of biology at Bowling Green State University. At Stone he was a member of the permanent staff that carried on a continuous program of research on problems concerning the productivity of Lake Erie.

The appointment of Verduin, who will teach courses in botany and general biology, will fill the staff vacancy caused by the death this summer of WALDO E. STEIDTMANN, chairman of the biology department. CHARLES H. OTIS, a member of the department since 1930 and former chairman, was recently named acting department head for the 1955–56 academic year.

LAWRENCE R. HAFSTAD has been appointed head of the research staff of the General Motors Corp., effective later this year. He will succeed CHARLES L. MCCUEN, general manager of the research laboratories division since 1947, who is to retire after 29 years of service. By agreement with the Chase Manhattan Bank, Hafstad will be available to the bank in a consultative capacity on atomic energy matters "where there is no conflict of interest."

GORDON GUNTER, director of the University of Texas Institute of Marine Science, Port Aransas, was appointed director of the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory at Ocean Springs, Miss., on 1 Sept.

FRANCES A. HELLEBRANDT retired on 1 Sept. as head of the department of physical medicine and rehabilitation at the University of Illinois College of Medicine. She will live in Athens, Ohio, where she will devote full time to historical research and scientific writing.

A teacher and investigator in medical