News of Science

Consultant and Clearing House Service on Academically Talented

The National Education Association has announced the establishment of a consultant and clearing house service on education of the academically talented. Charles E. Bish, former principal of McKinley High School, Washington, D.C., has been named director of the 3-year project, which will collect information on such questions as: How can specific schools most effectively educate their talented students? What have experiments revealed on various methods? How can the teacher, guidance counselor, and school administrator cooperate? What is necessary in the way of teachers and equipment?

The new service will be carried on under the administration of the NEA and its appropriate units through a grant from the Carnegie Corporation. Chief concern of this project will be the academic subjects in the secondary schools. The new center will (i) provide consultant service to state and local school systems, to colleges and universities, and to local, state, and national education associations; (ii) keep an up-to-date record of experimental and research projects; (iii) develop a comprehensive collection of materials on all aspects of the problem; (iv) develop plans for needed research; and (v) organize study conferences on specialized topics within the field.

This much-needed service will assemble the results of research studies and other programs now carried on in various parts of the country and by numerous organizations. For the first time, those educators collecting information and those seeking it, will have a reliable and continuing point of contact.

The new service is a follow-up of the project carried on during the current year dealing with the identification and education of the academically talented pupil in the secondary school. A nationwide conference held last February under the chairmanship of James B. Conant, president emeritus of Harvard University and former ambasasdor to the Federal Republic of Germany, climaxed the earlier project. That conference, also financed by the Carnegie Corporation, brought forth recommendations published by NEA and widely circulated throughout the country. Inquiries should be directed to: Dr. Charles E. Bish, Director, Project on the Academically Talented Pupil, National Education Association, 1201 16th St., N.W., Washington 4, D.C.

Soviet Dogs Ascend 281 Miles

The Soviet News Agency Tass has reported that the U.S.S.R. sent two dogs up in a rocket to an altitude of 281 miles and returned them safely to earth. It is not clear whether or not the dogs remained in the rocket during ascent and descent or whether, as in earlier experiments, they were parachuted to earth in a hermetically sealed compartment. The highest altitude reached in previous Soviet experiments with animals that were returned was 132.5 miles.

A single-stage rocket was used. It pushed a load of 1690 kilograms (about 3718 pounds) to the 281 mile altitude. The weight was about 800 pounds more than that of Sputnik III.

U.S. research. The United States has tried three times this year to recover mice sent aloft in Thor-Able missiles. Search teams were unable to find the mice-carrying nose cones after they had fallen into the South Atlantic. However, data radioed from two missiles that had flown the prescribed trajectory indicated that the animals had survived the acceleration to 600 miles and the deceleration encountered on reentering the atmosphere.

In 1952, the United States sent two monkeys and two mice to an altitude of 36 miles in an Aerobee rocket. They survived.

Regional Census Training Center

A regional Census Training Center for Asia and the Far East opened 1 September in Tokyo under the sponsorship of the United Nations and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in cooperation with the Government of Japan. The Training Center, which will last until 13 December, will include some 50 participants from the following countries and territories: Afghanistan, Burma, Ceylon, China (Taiwan), Federation of Malaya, India, Indonesia, Iran, Korea, Laos, Nepal, North Borneo, Pakistan, Philippines, Ryukyu Islands, and Thailand.

Governments were asked to nominate as participants in the training center officials who are to be responsible in their countries for major technical phases of the world census which is planned for 1960. The director of the center is Seiichi Tobata, president of the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Council, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Japan; the co-director is Octavio Cabello, who is in charge of social statistics in the United Nations Statistical Office.

Censuses of population, housing and agriculture are of basic importance to the planning of economic and social development. However, it is important to obtain a reasonable degree of comparability in the censuses. To provide census assistance to governments, the United Nations and FAO are making regional teams of experts available on request. These teams will help governments in organizing regional training centers to deal with all aspects of census operations. The Tokyo center is devoted to the actual planning and organization of censuses. Training will be offered in 1959 or 1960 on the analysis, evaluation, and use of census results.

Army Research Office

The new Army Research Office, located at Arlington Hall Station, Arlington, Va., was established in March of this year for the purpose of promoting and coordinating the growing Army research effort in physical, engineering, geophysical, biological, medical, and social sciences. It is in communication with the nation's scientific community to obtain new ideas, approaches, and techniques which can be used in the Army's Research and Development Program. It also guides the efforts of the Army's seven Technical Services, which continue to direct actual research projects in their respective fields.

It functions as an integral part of the Army's Office of the Chief of Research and Development, and in this respect it differs from both the Office of Naval Research and the Air Force Office of Scientific Research, which operate as organizations separate from their respective staffs. The ARO method of operation is designed to fill the particular needs of the Army structure and to exploit the strength of its Technical Services, which will continue to make increasing use of research capabilities of private industry, universities, and nonprofit organizations.

Generally, in the Army, the develop-