

EXTRACTS FROM THE INFORMATION SERVICE OF THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION

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“THE PROPER STUDY OF MANKIND IS MAN”

Medicine, both curative and preventive, whether it be considered as science or art, quite obviously depends directly on psychology, biology, chemistry and physics. The discovery of microbes, for example, created a new biological science, bacteriology, which radically modified medical ideas and procedures. Later, the progress of chemistry in its relation to organic life had a profound influence on knowledge of the body and its processes. Now it is realized that the modern science of the mind, psychology, must be taken systematically into account by the medical scientist and the physician. So *the Rockefeller Foundation has naturally, if not inevitably, been drawn into at least the borders of the fields of biology and psychology, as these have a bearing on medicine and public health and on man's development.*

During 1925, through the Division of Studies, the Foundation aided both the American and the Canadian committees for mental hygiene which are concerned with the relations of psychology to mental diseases, their treatment and prevention. Grants were made to the University of Iowa for research in brain physiology and its application to certain problems of mental defects in children. Support was continued for forty-one fellowships in biology administered by the National Council. The sum of \$50,000 was appropriated toward new buildings for the Marine Biological Station at Pacific Grove, California. Funds were also supplied for a biological abstract service which is described in another section.

In the field of human biology, under which may be included physiology, psychology and psychiatry, and anthropology both physical and cultural, as these throw light on man's body, mind and social relations, significant beginnings were made. Contributions were made toward the support of an Institute of Biological Research at the Johns Hopkins University, which has chosen as one of its leading problems studies in the duration of life in selected insects, other animals and in man. Another project from which valuable results are expected is a study at Yale University of the growth,

diseases, behavior, intelligence and possible means of communication of primates. Four young chimpanzees have been under observation during the past year in a special laboratory. The funds which enable the Department of Psychology to carry on this work are supplied by the Foundation through the Division of Studies.

A WORLD MEMORY FOR BIOLOGY

One special aid to the progress of biology calls for separate notice. The enormous number of scientific papers and volumes published annually throughout the world in every field of research creates the need for some kind of systematic organization of this material in a readily accessible form. A great library undertakes at least a part of this task. Such an institution has been likened to a social memory or brain.

But each library after all is only a section of a national and of a world memory or brain. The books and periodicals on its shelves come from all lands where new truth is discovered and then described in print. Thus in the field of biology alone it is estimated that each year forty thousand articles of at least some value appear in five thousand journals, transactions of scientific societies, proceedings of congresses, and the like. To be sure, these papers vary enormously in their importance. Probably in a given year only a small percentage is highly significant in fundamental ways. The bulk of them perhaps deal with useful details. A good many are likely to be trivial if not negligible. Yet if a scientific worker is to avoid duplicating the research of others, if he is to compare his methods with theirs, if he is to have his mind steadily fertilized by relevant ideas and suggestion if he is to increase the chance of getting a happy illuminating flash upon his problems, he must have constant access to the world memory.

To meet this need abstract journals which give the gist of articles and papers have appeared in different countries. Elaborate indexes make reference easy and accurate. Some of the journals have attained international standing. Biology as a whole, however, has lacked satisfactory service of a world-wide sort. *Recently eighteen American biological societies joined in a plan to publish a journal of biological abstracts on an international basis. The co-operation of individuals and organizations in foreign countries is being sought and in most cases secured.* The National Research Councils of Japan and of Australia have responded warmly. The Royal Society of London and the French Federation of Natural Science Societies

have expressed an interest. Arrangements for exchange of material with abstract journals in Europe are being worked out.

The details of the new plan have been carefully studied. Eighty sections of subject-matter will be handled by eighty special editors. Co-operating foreign correspondence and libraries will help to scan the five thousand serials for significant papers. Authors and editorial collaborators will prepare the abstracts. By the use of small legible type and a thin opaque paper, 1,030 large pages will occupy only an inch of shelf room. When once under way it is expected that twelve monthly numbers with elaborate annual index will run to between 3,000 and 3,500 pages. The entire enterprise will be directed by a small full-time central staff of editors. The University of Pennsylvania provides headquarters free of charge, while the Marine Biological Laboratory at Wood's Hole offers summer offices on the same generous terms. In addition to the contributions of the American societies and the income from subscriptions, the Rockefeller Foundation has pledged \$350,000 to be spent over a ten-year period towards the cost of this plan to provide a world memory for biology.

