

GENERAL SCIENCE

Science Questions Center

A referral center that gives names of sources that can best give needed information on science and technology has been established at the Library of Congress—By Watson Davis

► THERE IS one place that can start you on the road to finding out who knows what. For science and technology, that is.

Not that this Government agency—part of the famous Library of Congress—will give you a direct, specific answer to queries like: How many fish are there in the oceans? Where can I get a glue that will join metal and wood? Or a million other such questions.

The National Referral Center for Science and Technology, as it is called, does not answer technical inquiries directly. It does not give you literature references. To quote its official description "it functions as an intermediary, directing those who need information to those who can provide it."

Most answers will be given in the form of directories or names of sources that can best give the needed information. The query answers would like to know specifically just what information is needed. If they are told where the information has been sought, it will prevent duplication.

The new "information desk" of the scientific and technical community is intended to help the professionals who work on Government contracts, do research and are in professional organizations. Idle question askers will not be encouraged. It is not nearly as inclusive as the famous telephone service in Paris that answers almost any inquiry.

Congressmen get a great flow of inquiries, some of them scientific and technical, that they often pass on to Government bureaus. Some of the inquiries will find their way to the National Referral Center.

There are no charges for the service. The National Science Foundation is paying the bills. Inquiries can be made by telephone or mail or by visiting the center located in the Library of Congress annex not far from the U. S. Capitol.

The telephone number? Area code 202: 967-8265. Call again if it is busy!

• Science News Letter, 86:39 July 18, 1964

ARCHAEOLOGY

3,000-Year-Old Iron Works Found in Israel

► ISRAELI archaeologists have discovered what is believed to be one of the oldest metal processing plants in the world.

A series of smelting pits, anvils, and grinding equipment was discovered near Timna in southern Israel. The pits are thought to be at least 3,000 years old and to date back to the time of King Solomon's conquests in the 10th century B.C.

The ruins indicate a high degree of metallurgical skill in the period and the manufacture of superior weapons of war such as metal swords, knives and spears.

The expedition was conducted by the University of Tel Aviv and the Israeli government. Dr. Beno Rothenberg, of Tel Aviv University, who headed the expedition, described the smelting plant as more sophisticated than had ever been previously imagined.

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ARCHAEOLOGY

Ancient Assyrian City Excavated in Iraq

► TELL AL RIMAH, a 4,000-year-old city in Iraq that once had religious and cultural significance, has been uncovered by archaeologists of the British School of Archaeology in Iraq and the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania.

The city, which dates to the period of Shamshi-Adad I of Assyria, about 1800 B.C., is in the Sinjar region west of Mosul. It is about eight miles directly south of the modern market town of Tell 'Afar.

The city proper was at one time protected by high walls that enclosed a 45-acre area. At its center stands a mound, once a temple that rose 98 feet into the air.

This temple had such architectural structures as flying buttresses and half-columns. On the exposed side of the temple entrance was a grotesque stone carving of a demon. The temple had two major periods of occupation: The early Assyrian Empire of about

1800 B. C. and the Mitannian era of about 1500 B. C.

Scientists have also uncovered a well-preserved tablet that dates the original period of a palace. Within the palace area were at least five building levels spanning a thousand years.

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TECHNOLOGY

Computer Is Librarian For Stock Market

► ELECTRONIC COMPUTERS may soon be keeping files and statistics for stock brokers with a newly developed "stock library" system.

Data on almost 600 different companies are put on magnetic tapes or punched cards and leased to subscribers by Standard and Poor's Corporation, New York financial advisors.

Called "Compustat," the system contains information on 30 separate items for each company, including assets, liabilities, number of customers, dividends per share, and net income. Compustat records go back to 1946.

The service will be updated with new information every month. Current users include banks, brokers, insurance companies and universities.

Several additional services are being developed, including quarterly information for analysis of shorter-term trends. Another option to the main service will be special information on banks, insurance companies and possibly rails.

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ANTHROPOLOGY

Early Indians Believed Dream Interpretation

► DREAM INTERPRETATION played a big role in the life of Huron Indians of 17th Century southern Ontario, long before Freud.

Both the Hurons and their relatives, the Iroquois Indians of New York State, treated many maladies by interpreting dreams which were considered subconscious expressions of desires.

The Indians believed that a desire, when unfulfilled, caused illness or misfortune. If the desire were granted, the sick person would rapidly regain his health.

Once a sick Indian announced his desire, the villagers did their best to get it for him so that he would get well again. If the desire could not be fulfilled, the Indians tried to find an adequate substitute.

The customs of these primitive psychologists are described in a report, for the Bureau of American Ethnology of the Smithsonian Institution by Dr. Elisabeth Tooker, assistant professor of economics and sociology, Mt. Holyoke College, Mass.

The dream was the oracle of the Hurons, the report said. It played an important role in many of their tribal practices.

Dreams were also reported to be a factor in the acceptance of Christianity by the Hurons, since often dreams indicated that an ill person should be baptized.

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University of Pennsylvania

TEMPLE GUARD—A life-size demon mask of limestone is shown carved in the doorway of a temple at Tell al Rimah, Iraq.