

A Statement of Purpose

(The aims, ideals and aspirations of an institution)

SCIENCE SERVICE is a unique institution, established at Washington for the purpose of disseminating scientific information to the public. It aims to act as a sort of liaison agency between scientific circles and the world at large. It interprets original research and reports the meetings of learned societies in a way to enlighten the layman. The specialist is likewise a layman in every science except his own and he, too, needs to have new things explained to him in non-technical language. Scientific progress is so rapid and revolutionary nowadays that no one can keep up with it from what he learned at school. Science Service endeavors to provide life-continuation courses in all the sciences for newspaper readers anywhere in America without tuition fees or entrance examinations.

In a democracy like ours it is particularly important that the people as a whole should so far as possible understand the aims and achievements of modern science, not only because of the value of such knowledge to themselves but because research directly or indirectly depends upon popular appreciation of its methods. In fact the success of democratic institutions, as well as the prosperity of the individual, may be said to depend upon the ability of people to distinguish between science and fakes, between the genuine expert and the pretender.

Science Service spares no pains or expense in the endeavor (1) to get the best possible quality of popular science writing and (2) to get it to the largest possible number of readers. If in doing this it can make both ends meet, so much the better. If not, it will do it anyway.

Through the generosity of E. W. Scripps, Science Service has been assured of such financial support as to insure its independence and permanence. Mr. Scripps's long and wide experience as a newspaper editor and proprietor had convinced him of the importance of scientific research as the foundation of the prosperity of the nation and as guide to sound thinking and living and he realized the need for an independent agency that would bring the results of research to the attention of the entire people so these could be applied to the solution of their personal, social or political problems.

Science Service is chartered as a non-profit-making institution and all receipts from articles, books, lectures and films are devoted to opening up new avenues for the diffusion of knowledge and developing promising methods of popular education. Although Science Service has a philanthropic purpose, it is conducted on business principles, with the aim of making each branch of its activities ultimately self-supporting so far as possible. All acceptable contributions are paid for and all published articles are charged for.

Science Service is under the control of a Board of Trustees composed of ten scientists and five journalists. The leading national organizations of all the sciences, the National Academy of Sciences, the National Research Council, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science, appoint three trustees each.

Science Service occupies offices in the magnificent new building of the National Academy of Sciences and the National Research Council on Potomac Park opposite the Lincoln Memorial.

This strategic situation enables the Service to keep constantly in touch with the progress of the sciences because new inventions and discoveries are promptly put on exhibition in the building, and the Council brings together investigators in the various sciences and leaders in engineering and industry from all parts of the country.

Science Service is not a governmental institution, but it is in close contact with the numerous governmental bureaus of research. It is not under the control of any clique, class or commercial interest. It is not the organ of any single scientific association. It serves all the sciences. It engages in no propaganda, unless it be called propaganda to urge the value of research and the usefulness of science.

Science Service began its work on January 1, 1921, and has now a sizable office staff with a large corps of contributors in the chief research institutions of this country and Europe.