

GENERAL SCIENCE

Science Fairs Aid Nation

► NATIONAL SECURITY Resources Board Chairman Stuart Symington praised the local and National Science Fairs as helping to keep America's lead in science and technology.

The Second Annual National Science Fair, sponsored jointly by Science Service and local newspapers, will be held in St. Louis, May 10-12. High school boys and girls from all over the country, who were winners in local fairs, will participate.

"Scientific and technical know-how," Chairman Symington said, "have made this Nation a leader among nations, and will keep it so. Newspapers and educators aware of the critical shortage of scientific personnel, are striking at the roots of the problem in a cooperative effort to encourage scientific interests at the student level through such media as science fairs.

"With this sort of watchful leadership America will never be caught technically unprepared."

Other national leaders have spoken of the critical shortage of scientific, technical and engineering personnel needed to keep the nation ahead of communism, a shortage which the science fairs are designed to help overcome.

Students from ten states and the District of Columbia will arrive in St. Louis May 10 to set up their scientific exhibits. The

exhibits will be judged by a panel of outstanding scientists and awards of scientific equipment and books worth \$1,000 will be made to the outstanding students. Each national contestant will receive a Gold and Silver Finalist Medal.

In all cases, the students won the right to make the trip to the National Science Fair at local fairs in their own communities and states. There they competed with their classmates and neighbors.

In St. Louis, Washington University will be the site of the Fair. In addition to displaying and explaining their exhibits, they will meet and talk with outstanding scientists and tour the city and its research laboratories.

The sponsoring newspapers, responsible with high school teachers and Science Service for both the local and National Science Fairs, are:

The Hartford (Conn.) Times, The Washington Daily News, The Evansville (Ind.) Press, The St. Louis Star-Times, The Knickerbocker (Albany, N. Y.) News, The Oneonta (N. Y.) Star, The Grand Forks (N. D.) Herald, The Archbold (O.) Buckeye, The Oklahoma City Times, The Allentown (Pa.) Call-Chronicle Newspapers, The Philadelphia Inquirer, The Providence (R. I.) Journal-Bulletin and The Martinsville (Va.) Bulletin.

Science News Letter, April 21, 1951

GENERAL SCIENCE

Draft Boards Have Option

► THE TEMPEST in a teapot about the college deferment system is about over. Two immovable facts which opponents of the system had not understood quieted the storm. They were brought out in an executive session of the House Armed Services Committee.

Fact number one is that the new deferment system was not mandatory on the local boards—could not be under the present draft law. The resolution introduced by Rep. Paul Kilday, D.-Tex., merely reaffirms this fact, really does not change anything.

Fact number two is that the new system actually will put into the army more college boys than are going under present regulations. Now, all college boys are deferred. Next year, a good percentage will not be able to escape the draft.

There was a third issue, having nothing to do with draft facts or regulations, which really folded the opposition within the House Armed Services Committee to the college deferment plan. Members learned that small colleges—important in many of their districts—would get as fair a break as the big colleges like Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Thus, Harvard President James Conant's

opposition to a plan of college deferment boomeranged. The Congressmen reasoned—fairly or unfairly—that Dr. Conant was for military service and training for everybody because he knew Harvard would not suffer and he did not care about the little colleges.

The life of many little colleges depends on some system of college deferment. The Congressmen were sensitive to this.

Therefore, the House Armed Services Committee, while reaffirming the right of local draft boards to have the final say, dropped its opposition to the college draft plan.

U. S. Commissioner of Education Earl McGrath said that a total of less than 300,000 would be affected by the new plan.

There are 1,059,000 full-time, undergraduate males between the ages of 18 and 26 in the nation's colleges. Of these, 689,000 are either veterans, Four-F's or in the R.O.T.C. Of the remaining 370,000 who are draft eligible, somewhere between 70,000 and 150,000 are not yet 19—present draft age limit.

Under the new college draft regulations, a percentage of these will not be able to meet deferment requirements and will be drafted. Therefore, those deferred to go to

college next year will not total more than 204,000.

An objection to the plan is that boys unable to afford to go to college would not be able to take advantage of the plan. Commissioner of Education McGrath, in releasing the correct figures, also called for immediate inauguration of a federal scholarship-fellowship plan to take care of this. He said this would be more in keeping with democratic principles.

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BIOLOGY

Devise Way to Estimate Next Fall's Pheasants Now

► BETTER REGULATION of the pheasant-hunting season, and possibly longer periods for shooting the game birds, may result from a method devised for estimating the spring hatch of the ring-necked pheasant.

The number of pheasants varies from one hunting season to another, as hunters know. One reason for this may be that the number of eggs laid by the female pheasants varies from year to year and from place to place.

By killing and examining a half dozen or so hens, biologists can get a good estimate of the number of pheasants to be hatched in any one year.

The studies were made by Prof. Roland K. Meyer of the University of Wisconsin, Madison, Cyril Kabat of the Wisconsin conservation department and Irven O. Buss of the State College of Washington, Pullman.

In southern Wisconsin and places of similar climate, pheasants begin to lay April 3 to 13 and the peak of the first layings occur April 18 to 28.

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INVENTION

High Quality Dry Ice Obtained From Natural Gas

► HIGH-QUALITY dry ice, relatively pure solid carbon dioxide, is obtained from raw natural gas containing gaseous to heavy crude oil hydrocarbons by a process on which the government issued a patent. The product is colorless, odorless, tasteless, and non-toxic, so is suitable for use in the refrigeration of foods.

In the process, well fluid of a petroleum well is separated into a gas cut of substantially fixed gases and methane, an ethane cut, and cuts of heavier products. The gases are burned with substantially pure oxygen to form carbon dioxide. The ethane is used to purify the carbon dioxide.

Inventors are Robert P. Russell and Walter H. Rupp, Mountainside, N. J. Patent 2,548,498 was awarded them. Rights to the patent have been assigned to Standard Oil Development Company.

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