

## Do You Know?

Australian football and Irish football are somewhat alike, but the Australian game is played with an oval ball on an oval field and the Irish game with a round ball on a square field.

*Ocean ice* is classed as field ice, growlers and icebergs; the first is pack ice of shallow draft, the second are low-lying pieces of glacier ice not as large as bergs, and icebergs are large floating masses four-fifths under water.

One characteristic of *birds* is the dominance of vision over other senses.

The so-called *barking frog* found in Texas has a remarkable call that somewhat resembles the barking of a dog.

*Air* within a tube, if reduced to a very low pressure, can be made to glow by passing a high-voltage electrical discharge through it.

Cuba, Illinois-size, has some 80 species and 16 varieties of *palms*.

*Sulfur* is one of the four principal basic raw materials in chemical manufacture.

### GENERAL SCIENCE

## Await Foundation Bill

► NOW THAT Congress has reconvened, scientists, educators and military leaders are hoping that the nation can at last have a strong civilian peacetime organization for directing federal support of science—a National Science Foundation.

Rep. Charles A. Wolverton, Rep., N. J., told Science Service that he, too, hopes Congress can now complete action on a bill establishing the Foundation. Rep. Wolverton, chairman of the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, introduced a science foundation bill at the same time that an identical one was put in the Senate hopper by Sen. H. Alexander Smith, Rep., N. J., for a bi-partisan group of senators. The Senate passed by voice vote a slightly amended bill early in May. But the House version came out of committee late in the session and failed to get unanimous consent. When Congress adjourned, the bill had not come up for debate on the floor of the House yet.

Now, its supporters, including the Inter-Society Committee for a National Science Foundation which represents many scientific and educational groups, will be pushing for action on the bill which needs only action by the Rules Committee to bring it to the floor of the House.

President Truman's recall of Congress gives another breath of life to the long-

awaited Foundation. Envisioned originally by Dr. Vannevar Bush as a peacetime successor to the Office of Scientific Research and Development which he headed in World War II, the Foundation has had a hectic legislative history. It has been discussed by witnesses at Congressional hearings since the war ended. A bill passed the Senate in the seventy-ninth Congress, and both houses a year ago when President Truman killed it by a pocket veto.

The present bills—the one which passed the Senate and the one which is before the House—differ only in detail. Both are believed to be satisfactory to the Administration. In fact, no one seems to oppose actively the Foundation. But this has been generally true for some time and there is still no Foundation.

If the House passes the bill, it will probably be sent into a conference to iron out differences in the two pieces of legislation. Then, the bill would go to the White House.

A National Science Foundation would probably be cheered in many quarters. In addition to the scientists, who have favored such legislation all along, the military would heave a sigh of relief. The Armed Forces have been carrying much of the burden of government support to science since the war.

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### ARCHAEOLOGY

## Copy Asiatic Inscription

► THE first complete copy of an ancient inscription carved more than 2,400 years ago on the walls of Mount Behistun in Iran will be made by a group of American archaeologists this summer.

This inscription is called "The Rosetta Stone of Western Asia" after the original "Rosetta Stone" found on the Nile which held the key to Egyptian hieroglyphics. The inscription on Mount Behistun has shown scholars how to translate ancient cuneiform writing.

The expedition is sponsored by the University of Michigan and the American Schools of Oriental Research and is under the direction of Prof. George G. Cameron of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago.

The inscription the expedition will study is one of the most famous in Western Asia. Cut into the rocks by the order of Darius, King of Persia, it contains a relief showing Darius and 10 of his enemies whom he subdued. Underneath the relief are eight columns of cuneiform writing, telling how Darius outwitted his enemies, and, with the aid of his god Auramazda, became king over Persia. This, it is explained, was be-

cause he was "neither a liar nor an evil-doer, neither I nor any of my family."

The story is told in three languages which were current 2,500 years ago. These are: Elamite, which is mentioned in the Biblical book of Esther; old Persian, Darius' own tongue; and Babylonian. By comparing these different versions of the same story, modern scholars have found the key to cuneiform.

The expedition plans to re-examine all the doubtful passages in these inscriptions and also to study four additional columns of inscriptions which have never been read because they are inaccessible from the ground. In order to reach these columns the archaeologists will lower a scaffolding from a natural shelf, 300 feet above the inscriptions.

To copy and photograph the main part of the inscription which is carved 500 feet above a plain, the expedition will use standard mountain-climbing equipment and a skyscraper scaffolding.

The members of the expedition are leaving for Iran at the end of July. They hope to complete their work and return to this country in the early part of next year.

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