

\$3 Million Grant Made By U.S. for Antarctic Study

Washington (Science Service)—A broad program of research, supported by \$3,175,096 in grants from the National Science Foundation, will begin in the Antarctic in October. Dr. Alan T. Watkinson, NSF's director, has announced. An independent government agency, NSF administers the United States' antarctic research program.

A large part of the funds will be devoted to special biological projects, including the study of mites, flies and lice which may have been brought into Antarctica by air currents.

October is the beginning of antarctic summer. About 120 scientists and technical assistants will spend the "summer" in Antarctica. Forty-three are expected to winter over (summer in the United States).

The vast frozen continent has become "a unique laboratory for environmental studies," Dr. Watkinson said, calling attention to the ten biological projects planned there for 1960-61.

Biologists are particularly interested in several of the primitive life forms there and the adaptation of life to an extremely rigorous environment. A study will be made of the effect of the earth's rotation on the metabolic rhythm of plants. This growth becomes disoriented in some plants when they are placed in rotation counter to the earth's rotation. Investigators from the University of California at Los Angeles, by means of a drum rotating counter to the earth's spin, hope to find out how this affects the timing and response of plant growth—whether the "biological clocks" of certain plants and animals are affected by external environmental factors or whether they are innate.

The metabolism of fishes and studies of plankton in fresh water lakes of the Antarctic also will be investigated. The salt and water metabolism of the native penguins there will be explored.

A party led by Dr. Albert J. Cray, chief scientist of the U.S. antarctic research program, will explore miles of the South Polar Plateau. A second party under Dr. Charles R. Bentley of the University of Wisconsin will take geophysical data on Ellsworth Island.

Scientific Expedition
Dr. Cray's expedition will include some of the world's best seasonal antarctic scientists, with experience of at least seven previous expeditions. A Russian exchange scientist, now wintering at McMurdo, South Pole, will be among this valuable group of antarctic experts.

NSF's antarctic research money has been awarded to several government agencies as well as many colleges, universities and scientific institutions, with the latter showing a steadily increasing interest. Several additional grants are expected to be made before the close of the program in October. NSF support is expected to amount to about \$3 million.

America Ahead in Space Vehicles

Washington (Science Service)—The U.S. remains far ahead of Russia in the number of space vehicles still in orbit and transmitting data.

Twelve US satellites now circle the earth. Two US satellites orbit the sun. Of the 14, seven still transmit information.

Three Russian satellites are in orbit. Two circle the earth, the other the sun. One, the new Spacelab, is transmitting data. An attempt will be made to recover this earth satellite, bearing two dogs, from orbit.

Of the satellites launched in 1958, only the US Explorer I and the US Vanguard I are still up. The Vanguard still transmits.

Of the 1959 group, Russia's Lunik I and the United States' Pioneer IV and V are still in orbit around the sun. The 1959 earth satellites still up are all American: Vanguard II, Explorer XI, Vanguard III, and Explorer VII.

Explorer VII is the only 1959 satellite still transmitting.

Of those launched so far this year, the USSR's first "Spacelab" is still up but not transmitting. US satellites of 1960 still up but not transmitting are Pioneer V, in solar orbit, and Transit I-B, in earth orbit.

Still transmitting are the American Tiros I, Midas II, Transit II-A, the NRL satellite that was sent up on the same booster as Transit II-A, and Echo, all launched this year.

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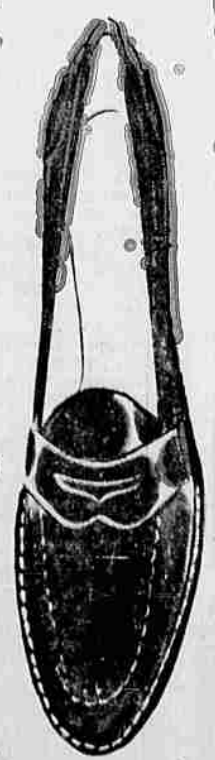


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