

Sharp Drop Reported in Physics Baccalaureates

Latest American Institute of Physics manpower data show a decline of almost 9% over the previous year in the number of physics bachelors degrees granted during 1965-66. The figure of 5037 was several hundred fewer than previous pessimistic estimates and turned a flattening-out trend of the past few years into one of definite decline, with physics baccalaureate production reaching its lowest level since 1959-60. Only the South Atlantic and particularly the Pacific states ran counter to the drop, which was most pronounced in New England. Four-year colleges as well as masters-granting and PhD institutions shared proportionately in the decline.

Two factors appeared to influence the drop. One is that (up to 1965-66) progressively fewer students have been enrolling as undergraduate physics majors. The other is the increase in the dropout rate of physics majors (from junior to baccalaureate). This rate had been declining during the past few years but during 1965-66 it belied estimates and increased from 27% to 30%.

Nevertheless there is one reason for optimism. The number of third-year physics majors increased from 7014 in 1965-66 to 7345 in 1966-67. Hence, a correspondingly larger crop of baccalaureates is hoped for next year.

Congress Slashes NBS and Higher-Education Budgets

A House appropriations subcommittee has dealt the National Bureau of Standards a bitter blow, cutting its fiscal 1968 authorization by \$7.8 million to \$32.49 million, even less than the bureau received the previous year. At the same time, the appropriations committee cut deeply into authorizations for the National Defense Education Act fellowship program, a major vehicle of support for graduate physics fellowships.

NBS. The cut in the NBS budget, if sustained in the Senate, will force

RESONANCES

Draft deferment status of physics graduate students remains temporarily unchanged, under a new law passed by Congress and a Presidential directive. Students in their second or later year of graduate work "may" be deferred (depending on their local boards) for up to five years to obtain their PhD's. (Some, as at present, will continue to be drafted.) Beginning graduate students "may" be deferred for one year. What happens to these and newer graduate students next year will hinge on whether the President adds physics to the list of graduate specialties receiving mandatory deferments, now including medical fields only.

200-GeV and LASL meson facility funds won approval from the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy and later from the House and Senate. They also voted to increase the Stanford linac operation from 10 to 15 shifts per week. Congress, however, rejected the Omnitron study, and some say the project is dead, with insufficient support from physicists.

A bubble chamber and storage rings have been recommended for fiscal 1969. The AEC high-energy advisory panel (Weisskopf committee) says Brookhaven should have the 14-foot chamber and Stanford the 3-GeV rings, each project costing about \$17 million.

the bureau to continue (at best) at about the same level of activity as this past year. But with increasing costs of research and restrictions on hiring new bureau scientists, NBS officials say that their overall operations will inevitably suffer, with consequent lowering of morale. Bureau officers are at a loss to explain why Rep. Rooney (D-NY), who heads the subcommittee holding the bureau purse-strings, voted against an NBS increase. "We had an increase of some \$3.5 million last year," said one NBS budget officer. "It looked as if we had finally gotten through to him and that Congress was beginning to appreciate the work we do." Other Washington observers, however, point out that, even though the financial climate in the Capitol this year is very poor, NBS scientists could do a better job in testifying before committees. "Bureau people have not yet learned to explain their programs so that nonscientists

and Congress can appreciate them," said one commentator. "By comparison the National Institutes of Health scientists present a much more effective case for support."

NBS spokesmen indicated they hoped for a restoration of the cut by the Senate. Historically, the Senate has restored NBS funds slashed by Rep. Rooney, and a Senate-House conference usually settles on half the increase. "We are pessimistic," said one official. "It's a time when the only money you get is for Vietnam or for the poverty program, and even that's in jeopardy."

NDEA fellowships. The House appropriations committee approved \$450 million in fiscal 1968 for construction grants for academic facilities, a figure some \$63 million less than the previous year. But what startled academic representatives in Washington was the committee action in cutting \$10 million from the \$96.6 million budgeted by