

# state & society

## Loans for out-of-work scientists proposed

A bill to provide long-term guaranteed loans for unemployed scientists and engineers was introduced by Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) and by Representatives John W. Davis (D-Ga.) and Robert N. Giaimo (D-Conn.) on 16 March. The bill is intended to supplement the Conversion Research and Education Bill of 1971, introduced by the same men late in January.

In introducing the loan bill Kennedy noted that the unemployment rate for scientists and engineers was 3% in January, the highest level for professional personnel since the Federal Government started keeping such statistics in 1958. Kennedy acknowledged that although many Americans are unemployed, scientists and engineers are a special group, whose talents can be converted from defense and space to civilian, socially useful programs. He said that these men will undoubtedly eventually find jobs at salaries equal to or greater than their old ones.

The bill would offer each unemployed scientist or engineer a "conversion loan" to assist him in making the transition, for an amount up to 60% of his previous salary, to a maximum of \$12 000 for the loan. He would begin repaying the loan three months after he finds a job with a salary equal to at

least two-thirds of his previous salary. The program would be administered by NSF, which would be authorized \$200 million over a three-year period to cover interest and default insurance. While an individual was unemployed, NSF would pay the interest on the loan. After reemployment, the individual would pay 3% interest, and NSF would pay the difference between 3% and the actual amount of interest charged for the loan. The amount of money available for loans is estimated to be over \$500 million dollars annually.

The Conversion Research and Edu-  
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KENNEDY

## Job shortage hits older physicists hardest

The main burden of the present employment crisis is being borne by the more experienced physicist, not the more visible new PhD's. In 1970 about 1500 new PhD's and 1700 experienced PhD's were looking for positions. Of these more than 30% of those looking for jobs in traditional areas of physics in the US failed to find them. An increasing number of physicists are finding jobs

abroad. The percentage of unemployed, now about 4% for new PhD's, and 1.5-2.5% for all of physics, is growing. These are some of the findings of the American Physical Society Economic Concerns Committee, headed by Lee Grodzins (MIT). A report on the findings can be obtained from Grodzins and will appear in the June *Bulletin of the American Physical Society*.

Grodzins constructed a flow chart of PhD employment in 1967 (which he calls the last of the "good" years) and compared it with a chart for 1970. (See figures 1 and 2.) In 1967 the number of employed physicists increased by about 1200. Most of the new employees were new PhD's, but about 150 entered from abroad or came from other fields. By 1970 the flow of new jobs had diminished to a dribble: No more than 100 additional jobs were available. So there were at least 1000 fewer openings in 1970 than in 1967 while the number of new PhD's was 20% greater.

Of these 1500 new PhD's about 1100 found acceptable positions and about 400 did not. (Perhaps 200 would not have sought such positions in the US in a normal year.) The experienced PhD's fared much worse: Only about 900 out of the 1700 looking for jobs found new ones. So over a three-year period the situation changed from an undersupply of doctorates to an oversupply almost

## White House finds \$42m to help jobless technologists

A \$42-million program to find jobs and help retrain unemployed scientists and technicians was announced by the White House on 1 April. The new program, which will be administered by the Department of Labor's Manpower Division, will use funds already available in this year's budget.

The Federal Government and professional societies will join in promoting new jobs. The recently established National Registry for Scientists and Engineers, which acts as a central clearinghouse for applications and job openings throughout the US, is to be expanded.

Secretary of Labor James D. Hodgson said that out of the \$42 million, \$25 million would go for retraining so that engineers and scientists can redirect their talents into fields such as

the environment, urban problems, health and safety engineering. A "job-search" program, which would allow 20 000 job seekers to look for employment in new regions of the country, would cost \$5 million. Relocation funds would go to 10 000 families, at a cost of \$10 million. Two million dollars would fund a program in which small groups of professionals would seek methods for giving technological help to traditional sectors of the economy.

The new program was announced at a meeting in San Clemente, Calif. between aerospace and defense officials and some representatives of professional societies and universities. It was the second in what is expected to be a series of technological-unemployment meetings.