

because it suggests that public visibility or glamour will be the main criterion influencing public support and it is an invitation to physicists to "oversell" their discipline in order to maintain public support.

Brooks said that he thought that Stever's description of the political environment of physics is realistic. "I regret it," Brooks said, "but I am coming to the conclusion that until the Russians or the Japanese produce a sensational breakthrough involving physics which makes the US look foolish, nothing much can be done. In the past two decades, US physics has often produced relatively out of proportion to the support it has received, at least in many subfields. How long this can continue remains to be seen." —SMH

Appeal for spectroscopy laboratory in Allahabad

In February the Spectroscopy Laboratory at the University of Allahabad in India was destroyed by fire. The laboratory, created by the well-known astrophysicist M. N. Saha, was one of the best equipped physics-research labs in that country. The loss is estimated at about \$500 000.

An appeal is being made to physicists, astrophysicists, heads of laboratories and industries to contribute to the reconstruction of this facility. Support may take the form of financial aid, gifts of scientific equipment or scientific books.

For further information or to make contributions, contact the Head of the Dept. of Physics, Allahabad University, Allahabad, India, with a copy of the forwarding letter to the International Centre for Theoretical Physics, P. O. B. 586, 34100 Trieste, Italy.

NRC surveys science and engineering PhD's

At the request of the National Science Foundation the National Research Council is conducting a survey of a representative sample of 60 000 doctoral scientists and engineers in the US. The survey includes individuals in the physical, social and life sciences, mathematics and engineering. The results of the survey will give the Council information to help guide the development of national scientific policies.

Because such critical issues as the utilization and supply of doctoral scientists and engineers, the support of graduate education and the support of research and development and post-doctoral activities could be affected by the results of this survey, the Council

urges all who receive questionnaires to complete and return them. As soon as the results have been analyzed, statistical summaries will be made available.

Self-help groups teach job-hunting skills

A no-fee, voluntary self-help organization that helps unemployed scientists and engineers find jobs has set up branches in cities across the US. The program, called VEST (for "Volunteer Engineers, Scientists and Technicians"), is aided by a grant from the US Department of Labor to the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics.

New VEST members attend workshops to acquire skills in locating positions, writing letters and resumes, and being interviewed. The member can then become active in VEST by contributing his time to help run the VEST program while he helps others find jobs and is himself helped.

There are about thirty VEST chapters across the country. Raymond W. Sears, APS Placement Consultant, will send the address of the local chapters to physicists requesting this information. He can be reached at AIP, 335 E. 45th St., New York, N.Y. 10017.

Dow Chemical offers venture capital

Physicists who have started their own businesses in high-technology fields and who need financial help to develop and expand their operations have a new source for funds. The Dow Chemical Investment and Finance Corp, a subsidiary of Dow Chemical, is a venture capital firm that is willing to help young technologically oriented businesses not only with money, but with scientific and management support. We recently spoke with DCIFC's president, Herbert E. Engelmeyer, about his firm's policies on working with technologically intensive companies that are just starting out.

DCIFC is interested in providing venture capital and other support to businesses in high-technology fields that are already set up and that will probably begin to produce profits within three to five years. Engelmeyer said that while his firm is seeking good ideas for products and services, a company has to be developed to a certain point before Dow will consider backing it. The companies should be already organized and have a committed management team with a good business plan and a clearly identified product.

Engelmeyer said that Dow is uniquely qualified to back technologically oriented companies because DCIFC has at its disposal the resources of the whole Dow Chemical R&D team if it becomes necessary, to help in evaluation of proposed businesses and to aid in the development of those companies that are backed. Unlike many venture capital inverters, DCIFC has a staff that can discuss the scientific merit of the proposed plan. Other groups working at Dow Chemical, such as managerial and financial experts can also be used to the advantage of a young company. Engelmeyer said, "We're able to put a lot more than just cash on the line, and very often it's that 'lot more' that makes the difference between success and failure." He pointed out, however, that DCIFC is not interested in taking over any of the companies it backs by replacing the management, and is only interested in the profits that could result from success of the business.

DCIFC has a minimum investment level in a company of \$250 000 and is prepared to go up to several million, although the firm is more likely to go in with a consortium of investors if a large amount of money is involved. So far Engelmeyer's firm has invested in 18 projects, five last year, and has spent a total of about \$8 million.

Some of the companies that DCIFC has backed are Monolithic Memories, which makes semiconductor computer memories; International Plasma Corp., which makes equipment for producing plasmas for various applications; Electrogas dynamics, which makes electrostatic spray equipment for paints and crop dusting, and Waters Associates, a manufacturer of liquid chromatography equipment.

It is a difficult job to get venture capital funding, Engelmeyer told us—about 1% of the companies that seek venture capital eventually get it and only about 10% of those are very successful, but Engelmeyer hopes that DCIFC's statistics will be more favorable. Engelmeyer can be reached at DCIFC, 2020 Dow Center, P. O. Box 1684, Midland, Michigan 48640. —SMH

in brief

The 1974 Scintillation and Semiconductor Counter Symposium (SSCS) will be held concurrently with the Nuclear Science Symposium (NSS) on 11-13 December in Washington, D. C. Hereafter the eastern meetings of the NSS will be held in conjunction with the SSCS in every even-numbered year. The western NSS meetings will continue to be held in odd-numbered years.